Popular Support for Welfare State Reforms

On Welfare State Preferences and Welfare State Reforms in the Netherlands

Publieke steun voor herziening van de verzorgingsstaat

Over opvattingen over de verzorgingsstaat en herziening van de verzorgingsstaat in Nederland

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
op gezag van de
rector magnificus

Prof.dr. H.G. Schmidt

en volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties

De openbare verdediging zal plaatsvinden op
donderdag 22 maart 2012 om 13.30 uur

door
Judith Raven
geboren te Geleen

ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

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and

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Cover design and photography: Rutger Kuipers (photographs taken at Teatro Greco, Taormina, Sicily, Italy)

ISBN: 978-94-6191-185-8

Printed in the Netherlands on FSC-paper

For my father

Acknowledgements

This PhD-thesis is the result of five fruitful years of discovery and development. A striking metaphor for science and hence also for this PhD thesis, is cycling. When I was a child, I used to go cycling with my father in the hills of Limburg where I was born. Looking back at the labour put into this thesis, a lot of similarities between cycling and completing a PhD-thesis strike me. For both it is true that at the start there is a large degree of freedom and the wind can blow in any direction. Therefore good equipment is essential: a bag of knowledge, a compass to find more knowledge and a steer to keep the right direction. Nevertheless, you can be confronted with bad weather and hard winds, but also with lots of sunshine. A chosen path may appear to be a dead-end road. But unexpectedly, an idea may develop, and the path may appear to be a passageway that puts all parts of the puzzle in place. Until thereafter it appears that a part of the puzzle is misplaced and the whole process starts from scratch again. Because of this continuing quest, science is never boring for me. Another similarity with cycling is, although it may seem that you ride alone, there is always a team behind you for support. I would like to use this part of this thesis to thank everyone who has supported me, either through giving me directions, helping me to make all parts of the puzzle fit or just by providing me with distraction or relaxation when I needed that the most. A few people I would like to mention in particular.

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors, Romke van der Veen and Peter Achterberg for their inspiring guidance during the last five years. I was lucky enough to have two supervisors who complement each other seamlessly. In my attempts to get a grip on complex matters and developing theories, I have been allowed to profit from Romke's vast knowledge of the literature and theory. I would also like to thank Romke for allowing me the freedom with which I was able to finish this thesis my way but also for the corrections of the steering wheel when I was at risk to stray. Peter also supported the theoretical work and complemented this perfectly by making complex theories practically manageable in no time and with great enthusiasm. Thanks

to Peter, finishing this thesis was an enjoyable experience and his knowledge of and skills in statistics helped me greatly to finish this thesis in time.

Furthermore, I am grateful to my colleagues at the department of sociology of the Erasmus University Rotterdam for their critical and inspiring feedback on the components of the thesis during the "brown bag" meetings. In particular I would like to thank Mara Yerkes, Sander Quak, Fabian Dekker and Pascal Dérogée. You have been important for the development of this thesis for a lot of different reasons. Of course because of your helpful feedback on my project, but perhaps more importantly because of your humour and friendship. During my visit to the department of sociology at Umeå University, Sweden, I have been able to profit from the inspiring and intellectual research climate there. I would like to thank Stefan Svallfors and his colleagues for their valuable feedback on my thesis and their hospitality during my stay in Umeå. I am also grateful to thank the GAK foundation (Stichting Instituut GAK) for their financial support. I would also like to express my gratitude to Marcus van den Heuvel for all his good care during the pleasant taxi rides between Utrecht and Rotterdam.

In addition, the support of my friends and family has been indispensable; they gave life outside of work colour. I thank all my friends for their friendship, nice conversations over dinner and their support. I would like to mention a few people in particular. Firstmost I would like to thank my *paranimfen*, Hana van Ooijen and Lobke Smeels, for all their help and their wonderful friendship. I am very happy to have you two at my side during the defence of my PhD-thesis. Thanks to you I am confident that the defence and the festivities afterwards will run smoothly. Likewise I thank my dear mother, brothers - Sebastiaan and Boudewijn - sister - Michelle - and my grandmother for their everlasting and unconditional support with everything I do. Thanks to you I never feel lonely.

Finally I would like to thank two persons in particular. This thesis is dedicated to my father. Without him I probably would not have become a sociologist in the first place, but even more importantly he has always encouraged every interest that I have ever had, independent of the nature or duration of the interest and independent of I was good at it. My father is always supporting me, makes me more enthusiastic about things and makes me better at it. I am very grateful for this. The last and most important person I would like to thank is Rutger. I am grateful to Rutger for patiently assisting me

with the layout and for designing the cover. But I am even more grateful to Rutger for making my life so much nicer, happier and easier. In part, he does this through his ability to simplify things I see as 'complex', because he always helps me when I need it and doesn't help me when I don't, because he's always honest and because he encourages me to face challenges confidently. So, dearest Rutger, thank you for being you. I love you with all my heart.

Judith Raven, Utrecht, January 2012

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Chapter 1

On Popular Welfare State Support and Welfare State Transformations

1.1 Introduction

Since the mid-1970s, welfare states have been confronted with growing unemployment rates, inflation, declining economic growth, and the ensuing expansion of welfare costs. Because of these and other developments, a possible bankruptcy of welfare states was predicted (cf. De Swaan, 1988; O'Connor, 1973; 2002). The future of welfare states has been investigated and discussed extensively since then. Within the social sciences, these developments have led to an increased interest in the legitimacy of the welfare state.

One could wonder why we should care about individual welfare state preferences. A first reason is the assumption that welfare state legitimacy – in this study defined as individual welfare state support[1] – is deemed crucial for the maintenance of the welfare state (Brooks and Manza, 2006; Van Oorschot, 2000a). Citizens pay taxes that enable governments to provide welfare arrangements. Therefore, politicians care about the public's preferences towards welfare state policies, because political decisions influence public voting preferences directly through the voting ballot, or indirectly because politicians aim to avoid taking unpopular policy measures in order to escape electoral punishment. Hence, a decrease in legitimacy may lead the public to vote for political parties that do not have a preference for the maintenance of an expensive welfare state (De Beer and Koster, 2007).[2] Moreover, elites often claim to act or speak on behalf of majorities of larger social groups. Research on public opinion reinforces the

[1] The concepts welfare state legitimacy, welfare state support, and support for welfare (state) arrangements are used interchangeable in this study.

[2] Other scholars, however, argue that this premise is contested. I do not discuss this scholarly debate here, but in chapter 6 I shall.

belief that these elites indeed represent preferences of the majority or of specific social categories (e.g. the elderly). Therefore, politicians as well as social scientists aim to understand public preferences on welfare state policies in great detail.

Yet, what do we know about people's desires and wishes in regard to welfare state policies? The next section discusses the state of the art of welfare state legitimacy research in order to disentangle what we already know about individual welfare state preferences.

1.2 Welfare State Legitimacy: State of the Art

A review of the welfare state legitimacy literature reveals two separated streams claiming to understand public welfare state preferences. On the one hand, scholars – mainly political scientists (cf. Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Pierson, 1994; 2001a) – in this field of research examine welfare state reforms. These scholars analyse the way in which welfare states developed across time as well as possibilities for future reforms. Also, they speculate on possible consequences of welfare state reforms for politicians as well as for citizens. Yet, these scholars fail to test these speculations empirically. On the other hand, other scholars – mainly sociologists (cf. Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Van Oorschot, 2002) – focus on analysing public preferences in great detail. This stream should more or less be divided into more theoretically oriented scholars who predict how public opinion will be affected by several macro processes and more empirically oriented scholars examining public opinion at the individual level. Whereas theoretically oriented scholars argue that welfare state legitimacy should have decreased since the 1970s for various reasons, empirical evidence suggests that these concerns about decreasing welfare state legitimacy are highly exaggerated. Within this second stream, scholars fail to include welfare state policies in their analyses.

1.2.1 Legitimacy and Welfare State Reforms

This section briefly sketches welfare state reforms which characterize general developments in Western welfare states. Thereafter, I discuss studies examining possible consequences of welfare state reforms for welfare state legitimacy.

After the Second World War, welfare states expanded rapidly, resulting in rather generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements. Developments in poverty and social inequality, as well as the necessity for an educated and healthy working population, made a comprehensive welfare state desirable and unavoidable (De Swaan, 1988; Van der Veen, 2009). Accordingly, the main goal of many of these mature welfare states was to provide a minimal standard of living for needy citizens (Van Doorn, 1982). This standard of living did not solely imply the provision of a minimum income level; it also implied equalization of status (Marshall, 1964). In the so-called golden age of Western welfare states – the period after World War II until the 1970s – this minimal standard became increasingly generous. Welfare states expanded rapidly in this period. However, a breakpoint in this on-going welfare expansion arose after the 1980s. A number of developments – among other things the predicted bankruptcy of welfare states, increasing welfare dependency, and (suspicion of) welfare fraud – have caused Western welfare states[3] to change quite drastically since the 1980s, and in a direction opposite that of the so-called golden age. According to Gilbert (2004: 43-47), the overarching welfare philosophy has changed from a philosophy of a *welfare* state to that of an *enabling* state, or, in Giddens (1998) and Esping-Andersen's (2001) terms, a social investment state. Two main shifts characterize these reform policies of Western welfare states. First, social rights have become restricted, accompanied with reform policies that decrease distributive justice. Second, social rights to welfare state arrangements are increasingly combined with certain obligations. Consequently, welfare state arrangements have changed significantly.

Various scholars argue that welfare state reforms endanger welfare state legitimacy (Dallinger, 2010; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Jæger and Kvist, 2003; Jensen, 2007; Pierson, 1994; Rehm, 2007; Taylor-Gooby, 2001). Citizens are expected to drop their support for welfare arrangements as soon as perceived increased welfare costs are not matched by improved benefits. These predictions are based on the logic of rational choice. Changes in the balance between perceived costs and perceived benefits of the welfare state theoretically threaten support for the welfare state (Rosanvallon, 1988).

[3] Despite existing differences between Western welfare states on the level of regime types, a country's historical pattern, or its policy styles.

Welfare state reforms change this balance. Since welfare arrangements are transforming in such a way that they cover the risks of a smaller and more select group of citizens to an ever increasing degree (Gilbert, 2004; Taylor-Gooby, 2004), personal economic interest in welfare arrangements decreases or disappears for many members of the middle class. Consequently, scholars predict a decrease in welfare state legitimacy (De Beer, 2007; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Rehm, 2007). Other scholars, who do not focus solely on the middle class, analyse the effects of unpopular welfare state reform policies. They also predict a decrease in legitimacy as a result of reform policies which reduce social rights and consequently the level to which people benefit from these arrangements (Bonoli and Palier, 2000; Korpi, 1983; Pierson, 1994; Vis, 2009). Other scholars, however, argue that reform is necessary to overcome a welfare crisis. Because of these welfare state reform policies, Hirschman (1980) argues, a learning process will take place, eventually leading to a better quality service and more accurate consumer expectations. Were this true, welfare state legitimacy should increase rather than decrease as a result of welfare state reforms. This increase would then signify support for welfare state reform policies.

In sum, what do these studies tell us about welfare state legitimacy? On a theoretical level, scholars expect welfare state legitimacy to decrease, because reforms decrease people's economic interest in welfare state arrangements. The empirical foundation of these expectations is poor however. Moreover, the possibility that people could actually be supportive towards contemporary welfare state reforms is seldom considered – with the exception of Hirschman (1980), although public opinion is not directly considered in that study. So, in order to understand whether welfare state reforms indeed decrease welfare state legitimacy, research examining individual welfare preferences is called for, preferably studies investigating public support for welfare state reforms.

1.2.2 Individual Welfare State Support

The research outlined in this section is aimed at understanding individual welfare state support. Unfortunately, scholars who examine individual welfare state support (in theory or empirically) tend to isolate perceptions on welfare policies from real welfare

policies. Nevertheless, in theory, several scholars argue, there are good reasons to expect a decrease in welfare state legitimacy. In theory, the main threats to the continuation of high welfare state support are increased heterogeneity in society, changing individual interests in the welfare state (here as a result of economic developments and institutional inefficiency), and the more general process of individualization. However, these theoretical expectations are seldom, or rather poorly, empirically informed. In the following, I briefly discuss why scholars expect decreasing welfare state legitimacy, and I outline simultaneously the scarcity of relevant empirical evidence in regard to these expectations. Thereafter, I discuss findings in regard to general welfare state support.

Increasing heterogeneity is a result of the increase in absolute and relative numbers of ethnic minorities and of demographic developments (ageing societies). According to several scholars, increasing numbers of ethnic minorities pose a potential threat to welfare state support (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote, 2001; Bay and Pedersen, 2006), because citizens tend to feel more solidarity towards those with whom they identify themselves (De Swaan, 1994; Halvorsen, 2007; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007). To some extent, these scholars also demonstrate empirically that welfare state support is adversely affected by the presence of ethnic minorities. However, increasing heterogeneity due to migration is a relative new issue in welfare research. Other scholars focus on ageing societies: extension of life expectancy and a relative decrease in the number of young people. Because of these demographic developments, several scholars predict that welfare state legitimacy will decrease (Bonoli, George, and Taylor-Gooby, 2000; Logan and Spitze, 1995; Taylor-Gooby, 2004). Ageing societies increase tax burdens to a considerable degree because of increased claims on old-age pensions and healthcare. Since the young have to carry (relatively) the largest amount of this tax burden, legitimacy is expected to decrease. The empirical evidence in this regard is conflictive however. Although quite a few empirical studies demonstrate that the legitimacy of welfare state arrangements targeted at the elderly remains high (Becker, 2005; Mau, 2003; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Van Oorschot, 2006a), other research underscores a possible age conflict by demonstrating that the young prefer private old-age insurances above collective ones (Arts and Muffels, 2001).

Another reason why scholars predict a decrease in welfare state legitimacy is based on decreasing individual interests in welfare state arrangements. These rational choice-based arguments as to why welfare state legitimacy is expected to decrease are comparable to those discussed in section 1.2.1. However, the underlying processes causing a decrease in interests differ. Here, both rising prosperity and the inefficient way welfare states are organized change the balance between perceived welfare costs and perceived welfare benefits. During the last century, rising prosperity led to decreased economic self-interest in welfare arrangements for certain social groups. People became wealthier, and consequently were better able to fend for themselves. Since an important aim of welfare states is to protect vulnerable people (not wealthy people) against social risks, as prosperity rises, fewer people have need to avail of welfare arrangements. Rising prosperity could also partly explain the rise of neo-liberalism – under which free markets are preferred to welfare intervention – in the 1980s and 1990s. Taylor-Gooby (1991: 107) suggests that 'rising prosperity will enhance the opportunities for some to decamp to the private sector.' Once again, these rational choice-based premises remain at a theoretical level, because they are seldom profoundly empirically informed. In addition to rising prosperity, the presumed inefficient way welfare states are organized may influence the balance between perceived costs and perceived benefits (Lash, 1978; Pierson, 1991). The system may encourage free-rider behaviour (Hechter, 1987) and moral hazard (Murray, 1984), which makes the welfare state susceptible to abuse. These scholars assume that welfare fraud negatively affects welfare state support, because citizens may believe that the costs of welfare fraud do not outweigh the gains of welfare arrangements. Several empirical studies have indeed demonstrated that citizens believe welfare fraud is high (Becker, 2005; Coughlin, 1980: 113-117; Goul Andersen, 1999; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1985: 132-133).[4] Possible consequences of this suspicion about welfare state legitimacy have, to my knowledge, not been examined.

Finally, the on-going process of individualization has often been mentioned as a threat to welfare state support (Giddens, 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Kaase and Newton,

[4] However, suspicion of welfare fraud decreased between 1992 and 1996 in Sweden (Svallfors, 1999: 41-42).

1995; Trommel and Van der Veen, 1999). At the micro level, individualization can be conceived as support for individualistic values. Inglehart's (1997) famous book *Modernization and Postmodernization* demonstrates that people started to support individualistic values to an ever increasing degree across the last century. Thereafter, many other scholars underscore how a value shift took place from support for collective-oriented values towards increasing support for individualistic values (Achterberg, 2006a; Derks, 2006; Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Gross, 2006; Houtman, Achterberg, and Derks, 2008). This shift is among others a result of rising prosperity after World War II, which resulted in feelings of security (Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Inglehart, 1997). Therefore, scholars expect this value shift to decrease welfare state support. The empirical evidence for this premise is unfortunately rather weak.[5]

In addition to the scattered and inconclusive empirical findings in regard to the discussed latent threats to welfare state legitimacy, there is more empirical evidence when welfare state legitimacy is considered in a rather general way. Surprisingly though, this empirical evidence shows no sign of such a legitimacy decrease. Rather, it shows the opposite: high and stable, in some countries even increasing, public support for *generous* welfare state entitlements since the 1970s (cf. Becker, 2005; Boeri, Börsch-Supan, and Tabellini, 2001; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Jæger, 2006b; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Taylor-Gooby, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2002). Ringen (1987: 63) had already concluded in the 1980s that '[t]he welfare state remains popular, only slightly less popular than in its best years.' Later on, Bonoli et al. (2000: 4) concluded that '[t]he evidence of opinion studies is that, with minor upward and downward variation, public support for an interventionist state in the

[5] Inglehart (1997) demonstrates in a cross-national study a macro-level relationship between support for individualistic values and low welfare state support. In a study of 43 countries, Inglehart shows that, in countries where individual freedom is high on the political agenda, support for welfare state intervention and expansion is much lower than in other countries. However, Inglehart himself also shows that people who can be classified as postmaterialists, and who greatly value individual freedom, are more inclined to vote for traditionally leftist parties such as socialist or social democratic parties (Inglehart, 1977; 1997). These parties are traditional supporters of the welfare state. That these cultural individualists are in favour of parties that are generally seen as pro-welfare state sheds a new light on the alleged anti-welfarism of these individualists. A recent micro-level analysis by Achterberg et al. (2012, forthcoming) underscores this critique on Inglehart's macro-level evidence. This study shows a reverse relationship: those supporting individualistic values support welfare state settlements to a greater extent than those who do not (compare also Achterberg and Raven, 2012).

realm of employment and welfare was as strong in the mid-1990s as it was in the mid-1980s.' These conclusions apply to all European welfare states. To illustrate this, some percentages from Kaase and Newton's (1995: 83) study are presented. In Great Britain, public support for the welfare state was a stable 83 per cent between 1985 and 1990 and, in Italy, support increased during this same period, from 76 per cent in 1985 to 91 per cent in 1990. In Germany, welfare state support is lower, but it increased from 50 per cent in 1985 to 69 per cent in 1990.[6] Another Dutch study demonstrates that support increased from 71 per cent in 1975 to 91 per cent in 2004 in the Netherlands (Becker, 2005).

To conclude, what do these studies tell us about welfare state legitimacy? Above all, they reveal contradictions and expose what we do not know. At a rather general level, empirical studies demonstrate that support for *generous* welfare state arrangements remains high across time, whereas theoretically oriented scholars predict a decrease as a result of various processes. Remarkably, these studies omit possible relationships between welfare preferences and welfare policy developments. Research on in-depth levels of support as well as on support for welfare state reforms is underdeveloped

1.2.3 What Is Missing?

The ensuing research into welfare state legitimacy has created a paradox. No substantial decrease in welfare state legitimacy can be detected within existing empirical attitude studies, whereas in theory several processes, including welfare state reforms, pose latent threats to legitimacy. This paradox results from an inadequate understanding of individual welfare state support for two reasons.

First, and foremost, research on support for contemporary welfare state reforms is underdeveloped. It is likely that the public still supports social protection provided by the welfare state (based on the empirical evidence), but not the rather unconditional

[6] The exact wording of the question: 'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more," it might require a tax increase to pay for it'. Welfare policy is defined by health, education, retirement, and unemployment benefits (Kaase and Newton 1995: 83).

and generous sort of protection that was provided by welfare states in their so-called golden age. The conclusions of empirical attitude studies raise doubts about their validity for several reasons. In parliamentary democracies, it is not likely that public opinion and policy will deviate during a long time-period: if the public disapproves of public policies, they can vote for political parties that favour alternatives. Western welfare state policies have become increasingly sober and conditional since the early 1980s. Therefore, it is not likely that public opinion has gone in the opposite direction. This is, however, precisely what is suggested by empirical attitude studies. Developments within public opinion reveal some conflicting trends as well. In addition to studies demonstrating high or increasing support for generous welfare states, other studies show for example high suspicion of welfare fraud and welfare chauvinism among the public at large. These latter perceptions are likely to entail support for welfare state reforms that increase welfare conditionality. However, previous studies fail to examine the possibility that the public could actually support welfare state reforms. Therefore, support for welfare state reforms should be examined, rather than general support for generous welfare arrangements.

Second, existing empirical evidence fails to study welfare state legitimacy at an in-depth level. Welfare state support is predominantly examined at a rather general level. At a general level, empirical attitude studies reveal stable, high support for generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements – the opposite of support for dismantling welfare states. However, in-depth knowledge of welfare preferences could resolve many contradictions. It is for example possible for the public to reject some kinds of welfare state reforms to a large extent, while supporting other reforms to a large extent. For these two reasons, we need thorough research at an in-depth level on support for welfare state reform policies. In order to get below the surface of the rather general way welfare state support has been investigated and interpreted so far, this study examines the following central question:

To what extent does the Dutch public support welfare state arrangements and why? And how is this related to transformations of the welfare state?

This study focuses on welfare state legitimacy in the Netherlands. The Dutch welfare state is a justifiable case study choice because of its profound welfare state transformations. The Netherlands is a particularly interesting case, since it is one of the few countries in which welfare state expenditure has actually decreased (Green-Pederson 2001).[7] Moreover, 'a fundamental shift in the content and the character of the Dutch welfare state from a model of collective solidarity towards one of personal responsibility' occurred (Van Oorschot, 2006b: 57; see also Yerkes, 2011; Yerkes and van der Veen, 2011). However, it is important to stress that this choice does not imply that the results merely have value for the Netherlands. The concluding chapter 7 discusses the value of results for other countries in detail.

For the three reasons outlined in the next sections, existing empirical evidence is expected to be invalid and incomplete. Section 1.3 discusses why the multiple studies that demonstrate high, or increasing, support for generous welfare state arrangements may be invalid. Section 1.4 discusses why we need more thorough research on why the public at large supports welfare state arrangements and on how and why they support different social categories. Section 1.5 elaborates on the largely untested mutual relationship between welfare state institutions and popular welfare state support.

1.3 Invalid Empirical Evidence on Welfare State Legitimacy?

Welfare states have undergone profound changes (see section 1.2.1). Consequently, it is possible that the way previous studies interpreted their findings is invalid. Support for generous welfare arrangements is predominantly measured by preferences to increase benefit-income levels or welfare state expenditure. However, since the arrangements have transformed across time, it is quite likely that the meaning of preferences to increase entitlements to welfare state arrangements may have changed likewise. It cannot, therefore, be taken for granted that support in the early 1970s signifies the same as support in the late 1990s. A shortcoming of welfare state legitimacy studies demonstrating stable high, or increasing, support for generous welfare arrangements is that they most often do not control for welfare state reforms. Therefore, we need

[7] However, according to Kuhner (2007), that seems to depend on the indicators used.

research to disentangle whether the public indeed supports generous welfare state arrangements, or whether they support the opposite: increasing obligations and decreasing generosity within welfare arrangements. Or in other words, does the public at large support welfare state reform rather than generous welfare arrangements? Previous longitudinal studies rarely control welfare attitudes for real policy developments. Consequently, they cannot properly answer these questions. In short, in order to understand welfare state legitimacy more accurately, we need longitudinal research in which attitudes are controlled for reform within real welfare policy. If support for generous welfare arrangements then decreases, this support signifies support for welfare state reform policies rather than support for generous welfare state arrangements.

Moreover, support for welfare reform could be multidimensional. It is, for example, possible that the public supports reform aimed at preventing welfare dependency, while rejecting reform that decreases benefit-income levels. Evidence from the 1992 Eurobarometer indeed indicates that it is likely that the public distinguishes between support for various types of welfare state reform. While on the one hand the results demonstrate that Europeans sensed a necessity for restrictive welfare reform, they were, on the other hand, also strongly in favour of 'the maintenance of a broad range of social guarantees even at the cost of increased taxes and contributions' (Ferrera, 1993: ch. 9 (page numbers are lacking in this report)). Hence, Europeans seem to be supportive of decreasing social rights, while they are also prepared to pay more taxes to maintain, or increase, social rights to social security arrangements. Moreover, in 2003, the British public at large supported a conditional approach to granting social rights (Sefton, 2003), and this could apply to other Europeans as well. These results seem contradictory. Yet, if the public at large differentiates between multiple types of welfare state reform, it does make sense. In short, it is likely that the public discerns different roots of welfare state reform. Research on this possible multidimensionality of support for welfare state reforms is scarce (but see Svallfors, 1993). Therefore, in order to understand support for welfare state reform, we first need to understand which roots of welfare state reform the public at large distinguishes. Otherwise, negative and positive evaluations of welfare state reform policies could average each other out. Also,

measuring support for one general reform dimension may result in invalid conclusions if preferences are based mainly on just one specific reform policy.

In sum, trends in welfare state support should be re-analysed in order to disentangle whether support for generous benefits in fact signifies support for welfare state reform. Also, we need research on the possible multidimensionality of support for welfare state reform policies.

1.4 Inadequate Understanding of the Ideological Structure and Basis of Support?

The next step is to examine why the public at large supports different roots of welfare state reform. An inadequate understanding of why the public at large supports welfare arrangements could guide scholars to formulate false predictions on welfare state legitimacy. As discussed in section 1.2, in various debates scholars have argued that it is mainly pure economic self- or class-interest that shapes preferences about welfare state arrangements (cf. Bean and Papadakis, 1998; De Swaan, 1988; Gelissen, 2000; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Jæger, 2006a; Pierson, 1994; 1996; Svallfors, 2007a). Yet, despite these rational choice arguments leading scholars to predict that the public at large will reject welfare state reforms, the basis of support for reform is poorly examined empirically.

In relation to explanatory mechanisms for welfare state legitimacy in general, research proves that rational choice is indeed an important mechanism shaping welfare state support, but it is certainly not the only one (cf. Etzioni 1987; Hasenfeld and Rafferty 1989; Kangas 1997; Papadakis 1993; Peillon 1996; Taylor-Gooby 1985; Van Oorschot 2002). Most likely, this applies to support for welfare state reforms as well. Therefore, we need detailed research examining the extent to which moral motives drive support for welfare state reform. Moral motives can be translated into criteria that the public at large use to judge who deserves state aid and who does not (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Appelbaum, 2002; Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Will, 1993). Appelbaum (2002) demonstrates the effects of one such criterion – the extent to which welfare beneficiaries bear personal responsibility for their neediness –

on welfare state support. The public, however, uses several criteria, the effects of which on welfare state support, in general as well as on support for reforms, have been largely untested. As already discussed, welfare state legitimacy was predicted to decrease as a result of processes that increase heterogeneity in Western welfare states, because identification with the needy would decrease as a consequence. Identification is another example of such a moral criterion (Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Van Oorschot, 2000b). In an indirect way, one could say that Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989: 1043) demonstrated that identification has an effect on welfare state support. They show that 'upper income blacks are more supportive of the welfare state than their white counterparts.' Since the American public is convinced that welfare beneficiaries most often are black (compare Gilens, 1999), this result could be explained by identification of those upper income blacks with black poor, who receive welfare. Interestingly, this example also demonstrates that the public could support welfare state arrangements even if their personal economic interest in these arrangements decreases or disappears. However, the relative effects of different criteria on welfare state legitimacy has to my knowledge not been tested. Research that examines the relative effects of different moral criteria would improve our understanding of support for welfare state reform to a considerable degree. Moreover, provided that the public indeed distinguishes between different welfare state reform dimensions, as suggested in section 1.3, the ideological basis and structure of support for these dimensions could differ as well.

Research on welfare state legitimacy in general reveals that support also depends on who is receiving state aid. Some social categories are considered highly deserving of receiving state aid, whereas others are not (Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Coughlin, 1980; Kangas, 1997; Katz, 1990; Petterson, 1995; Ringen, 1987). Consequently, it is possible that the public at large prefers welfare state reform to be targeted to a large extent at some social categories, while barely at others. Research is scarce, however, on whether the public at large does not prefer reform policies to be targeted at 'deserving' social categories, although favouring reform policies (for example, increasing obligations in return for receiving welfare arrangements) to be targeted at 'undeserving' social categories (but see Slothuus, 2007). Moreover, provided that the public at large indeed distinguishes between various welfare state reform

dimensions, they could prefer one type of reform to be heavily targeted at a specific social category, whereas another type of reform should not apply to this category. This in-depth level of welfare state legitimacy has, to my knowledge, not yet been examined or explained, despite the fact that such research would significantly improve our understanding of support for welfare state reforms.

In sum, in order to improve our understanding of welfare state legitimacy, we need detailed research on the ideological basis and structure of support for welfare state reform dimensions as well as research on preferences as to whom the public prefers these reform dimensions to target.

1.5 The Obscure Relationship between Public Opinion and Social Policy?

The last step necessary in order to understand welfare state legitimacy is to investigate the relationship between the object of this study itself, social policy designs, and public opinion. To investigate this relationship properly, two steps need to be taken: explore what explanatory mechanism connects social policy designs at the macro level and public opinion at the micro level and disentangle the direction of causality between these two levels.

To link the macro level – analysis of the organization of social policy – and the micro level – individual welfare state support, we need an explanatory mechanism. Many theories on welfare state legitimacy lack an explanatory mechanism that properly links these two levels (compare Albrekt Larsen 2006: 2; Korpi and Palme 1998: 682).[8] 'Although many macro theories explicitly rely on them, […] individual level mechanisms are usually only stated as assumptions and remain largely untested' (Rehm, 2009: 856). Within the development of social theory, Coleman observes an increasing gap between social theory and empirical research. 'Social theory continues to be about the functioning of social systems of behavior, but empirical research is often concerned with explaining individual behavior' (Coleman, 1990:1). To overcome this problem, an explanatory mechanism that links macro-level explanations and micro-level explanations

[8] This problem is exacerbated by a lack of longitudinal micro data.

is imperative. Hedström and Swedberg (1996: 281) state 'that the essential aim of sociological theorizing should be to develop fine-grained middle-range theories that clearly explicate the social mechanisms that produce observed relationships between explanans and explanandum.' In the literature on welfare state legitimacy, scholars often fail to develop and/or test fine-grained middle-range theory. Most often scholars examine either explanatory mechanisms (self-interest or ideology) merely at the micro level (cf Etzioni, 1987; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Kangas, 1997; Papadakis, 1993; Peillon, 1996; Van Oorschot, 2002) or institutional ideology at the macro level (Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1997; but see Albrekt Larsen 2006 and Mau 2003 for exceptions). To connect both levels, individual preferences on institutional ideology should be connected to institutional ideology incorporated within real policy designs.

The famous power resource theory developed by Korpi (1983) is an illustration of causal reasoning lacking a valid micro foundation. It has a middle-range theory that is theoretically but not empirically founded at the individual level. Korpi argues that public opinion influences social policy indirectly through the voting ballot. The power resource model assumes that citizens' behaviour is guided by class interests, meaning that the less educated vote for leftist parties, whereas the more highly educated vote for rightist parties. However, Korpi did not investigate this at the micro level. In fact, when we consider recent studies on citizens' voting behaviour it appears that class interests are less predictable nowadays. Class interests apparently are no longer based on economic insecurity alone; cultural insecurity seems to determine the political values of the less educated as well, and this latter insecurity explains why some of the less educated vote for new rightist political parties instead of leftist (pro-welfare) parties (Achterberg, 2006b; Achterberg and Houtman, 2009; Houtman et al., 2008). Hence, theory that lacks empirically founded fine-grained middle-range theory could be based on incorrect assumptions, possibly leading to incorrect predictions about welfare state legitimacy.

Having said that, in order to properly understand welfare state legitimacy, we need a fine-grained middle-range theory based on institutional ideology. The notion that there is a moral economy connects individual preferences on institutional ideology and institutional ideology that is incorporated within social policy designs. This notion of a

moral economy is based on a moral contract between authorities and the governed. This moral contract is based on a deep-rooted societal consensus about the rights to which all citizens should be entitled. Several scholars demonstrate that the legitimacy of authorities and of the policies that they implement is dependent on the level to which they honour this contract. In contrast, violation of this moral contract causes resistance of the governed towards the authorities and their policies (Kohli, 1987; Mau, 2003; Scott, 1976; Svallfors, 2006; Thompson, 1971). In regard to welfare state legitimacy, social policy designs receive public approval if they are in accordance with this moral contract. Or in other words, the public supports welfare arrangements if the institutional ideology on which social policy designs are based corresponds highly to the public's preferences on this institutional ideology (Kohli, 1987; Mau, 2003; Sachweh, Ullrich, and Christoph, 2007).

A fine-grained middle-range theory is also useful to examine the legitimacy of welfare state reform of different welfare arrangements. The institutional ideology that is incorporated in social security designs differs between different schemes. Moreover, the content and extent of welfare reform policies applied to different social security schemes vary as well. Consequently, norms incorporated within different schemes as well as reforms find public approval if individual preferences correspond to and develop in a similar manner to real policy designs. Therefore, this theory enables investigation of support for reform within specific social policy designs which are possibly targeted at different social categories. From the deservingness literature (discussed in section 1.4), it is likely that the public differentiates between preferred reforms within different schemes, for example between reforming the social assistance scheme and reforming old-age pensions. Therefore, in order to understand in depth the legitimacy of reforms within different social security designs, transformations in their moral economies should be studied.

However, providing an explanatory mechanism that connects the macro and micro level does not clarify the direction of causality. Do attitudes influence social policy or does social policy influence public opinion? Although many scholars assume that institutions influence citizens' attitudes (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Kohli, 1987; Mau, 2003; Svallfors, 1997), their studies fail

to demonstrate causality empirically. It remains unclear whether and why public attitudes influence social policy in some cases, whereas, in other cases, social policy influences public attitudes. Following Sharp (1999), a reciprocal causal relationship is more plausible. It should therefore be examined in what circumstances public opinion drives social policy, and in what circumstances social policy drives public opinion. Understanding this temporal order between policy and opinion is the final step needed to improve our understanding of welfare state legitimacy.

In sum, the last steps needed to improve our understanding of support for welfare state reform is to investigate an explanatory mechanism that connects social policy at the macro level and the public's perceptions at the micro level by examining moral economies of social security institutions, and to investigate the causal relationship between these two levels. The next section explains which chapter addresses which of the suggested research fields.

1.6 Overview of the Book

The research reported in chapter 2 focuses on the question of whether support for generous welfare state arrangements indeed remains high. In order to improve previous finding, I re-analyse the trend in individual welfare state support and control for real policy developments. This chapter demonstrates that we should indeed raise reasonable doubts in regard to previous findings that demonstrate that support for generous welfare state arrangements increased across time. Chapter 3 examines in-depth levels of support for welfare state reforms. First, it elucidates whether the Dutch public distinguishes between different kinds of welfare state reforms. Then, it explores the ideological basis and structure of support for explanations of different kinds of welfare state reforms. The findings reveal that the Dutch differentiate between two dimensions of support for welfare state reform. The ideological basis and structure of support for these dimensions differs as well. Chapter 4 examines preferences as to whom the Dutch prefer different kinds of welfare state reforms to target heavily and why. The findings reveal that the Dutch do make distinctions as to whom one reform dimension should target; however, they do not in regard to a second reform dimension. In chapter 5 and

chapter 6, the macro level is included. Chapter 5 examines the moral economies of four social security institutions. This chapter demonstrates as expected that the Dutch support the institutional ideology that drives contemporary welfare reforms within four social security schemes. Moreover, the specific reform that is preferred for each specific scheme varies to a considerable degree. Chapter 6 deals with the causal relationship between welfare state institutions and public preferences. It answers the question about the policy areas in which social policy designs follow public preferences, when public opinion follows existing policy designs, and why. The research reported in chapter 6 demonstrates that there is indeed a reciprocal causal relationship, in which the causal direction is dependent upon the policy domain. Finally, chapter 7 discusses the conclusions and implications of my findings for this field of research.

The research results presented in chapters 2 and 5 have also been used in a book examining issues of solidarity in the Dutch welfare state (see Achterberg, Van der Veen, and Raven, 2010a) and in two book chapters (Van der Veen, Achterberg, and Raven, 2009; Van der Veen, Achterberg, and Raven, 2012). Also, articles based on research carried out for chapters 3, 4, and 6 have been published or submitted to international journals (Achterberg, Van der Veen, and Raven, Submitted; Raven, Achterberg, and van der Veen, Submitted; Raven, Achterberg, Van der veen, and Yerkes, 2011). Finally, research carried out for chapter 6 has also been published in a book (Raven, 2011).

The next section briefly outlines developments in unemployment, GDP, and social security usage in the Netherlands, which might be relevant to interpret the research reported in chapters 2 to 6.

1.7 The Dutch Case: Developments in Unemployment, GDP, and Welfare Claimants

As Dutch welfare reform policies ensue from the 1980s onwards, 1980 is roughly the starting point of this study. Figure 1.1 illustrates trends in unemployment rates and GDP. The figure demonstrates that unemployment rates roughly increase if GDP decreases, illustrating that, during an economic recession, unemployment rates rise and consequently welfare state claimants increase. The figure clearly shows the effects of

the second oil crisis of the early 1980s, followed by an increasing unemployment rate after that crisis. In 1984, a peak of 800,000 unemployed was reached. Thereafter, unemployment rates have never again reached such a high level. After this oil crisis, the Dutch government was convinced that welfare state reforms were unavoidable. In the remainder of this study, welfare state reforms and welfare state legitimacy are explored in great detail.

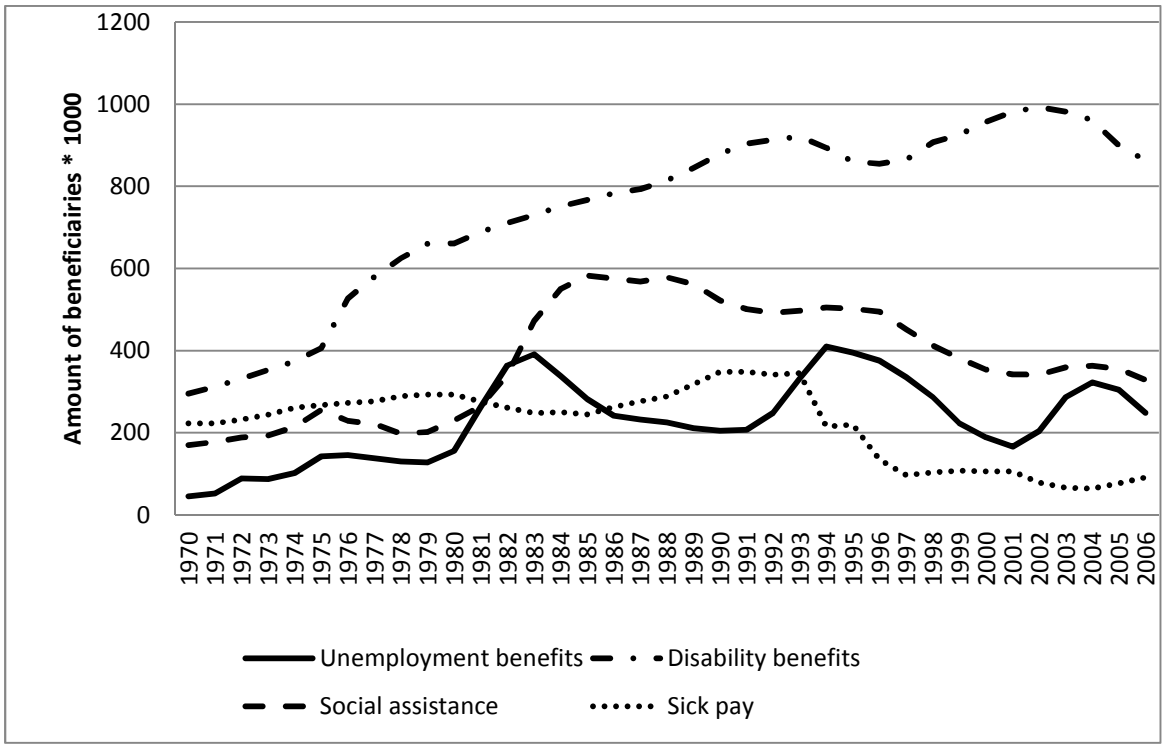
Figure 1.2 illustrates developments in claimants of four social security benefits. The figure indeed demonstrates a clear increase in beneficiaries from the 1980s onwards. Chapter 5 outlines developments within four Dutch social security schemes, and that description also explains the ups and downs shown in figure 1.2.

Furthermore, the Dutch population increased from 14 million people in 1980 to over 16 million in 2006 (CBS, 2010). Note that in this period, the number of elderly people increased significantly, whereas the number of young people decreased (CBS, 2010). Hence, due to this ageing of Dutch society, expenditure on state pensions will increase, but a relative small working population has to carry the tax burden. However, unemployment among the young should decrease simultaneously in the near future since many older people will exit the labour market. Moreover, the number of immigrants increased relatively strongly. That is relevant, because immigrants are overrepresented among Dutch welfare claimants (CBS, 2010).

In the remainder of this study, Dutch welfare state reforms are discussed in great detail (mainly in chapter 2 and chapter 5). Therefore, there is no need to discuss the Dutch case in more detail at this point. Readers interested in advanced descriptions of developments in the Dutch welfare state and employment to 2000 should consult Becker (2000). Becker also compares Dutch developments to developments in other Western welfare states. A report from the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR, 2006) also provides a detailed outline of Dutch welfare state developments to 2006 (unfortunately, this report is only available in Dutch).

Figure 1.1 Developments in Dutch unemployment rates and Dutch GDP

Figure 1.2 Developments in the number of social security claimants



Source of both figures: CBS (2010)

Chapter 2

Popular Welfare State Support Re-Examined

2.1 Introduction

This chapter re-examines popular welfare state support. Existing empirical studies on welfare state legitimacy contain three major flaws. First, these empirical studies are based on an incorrect (implicit) assumption: welfare states are conceived as stable factors that do not change. This assumption is false, since welfare state policy changes regularly and welfare states are dynamic (Becker, 2000; Bonoli and Palier, 2000; Clasen and Oorschot, 2002; Clayton and Pontusson, 1998; Gilbert, 2004; Van der Veen, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2006b). Contemporary welfare states differ from the expansive and generous welfare states of the early 1970s. Given the changes that have occurred within social policy designs, today's attitudes may have an entirely different meaning than the attitudes of twenty years ago. However, attitude studies often fail to control for welfare state reform policies, with the result that it remains unclear what the public actually supports.

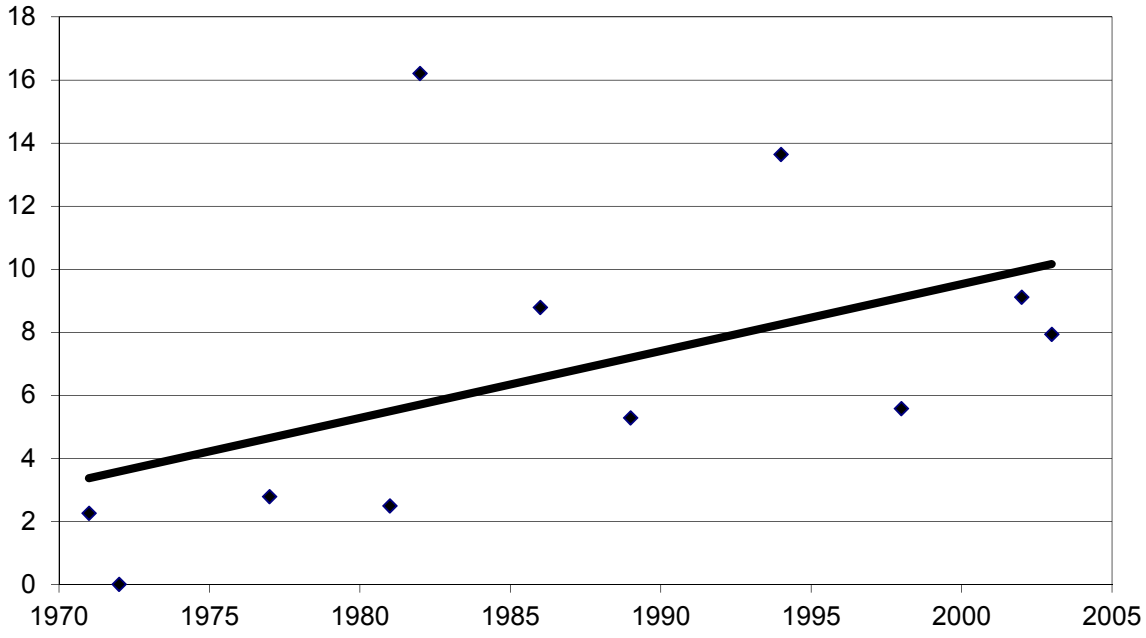
Second, studies demonstrating high and stable welfare state support have another incorrect assumption. A premise in many empirical studies is that increasing support for the welfare state equals support for generous and universal welfare arrangements. These studies predominantly measure welfare state support by asking respondents whether the government should increase or decrease spending on welfare state arrangements (Becker, 2005; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999). This is, however, a rather general way to investigate welfare state support. Support measured in this way could indicate several (contrasting) preferences, for example support for increasing expenditure on a labour market activation policy in order to help the unemployed to get a job (which suggests support for reform policies), or

support for increasing spending on healthcare, social security, or education. These scholars often conclude that they measure support for generous and universal social security benefits, but these conclusions are contested. Citizens could also prefer higher benefits today because they believe that welfare state reform policies have gone too far (Mau, 2003), or because they in fact support the direction of contemporary welfare state reform policies. Yet, despite this ambiguity about what has actually been measured, many researchers contend that welfare legitimacy equals support for generous welfare state arrangements.

Another reason to question outcomes of previous empirical studies stems from the discrepancy between apparently high and stable welfare state legitimacy and trends in popular support for neo-liberal policy. In the last few decades, electoral support for political parties supporting neoliberal policy – increasing individual responsibility, decreasing state interference, and less regulated markets – has increased (see figure 2.1). Conversely, support for political parties preferring a generous and extensive welfare state, instead of welfare state reform policies, has decreased. On the basis of the popular support for neoliberal parties, there is little evidence to support the premise that support for generous welfare state arrangements has remained high.

For these reasons, welfare state legitimacy needs to be re-examined. The question is whether one would arrive at similar conclusions after re-analysing identical Dutch survey data that previously demonstrated an increase in popular support for generous welfare state arrangements, if one avoided the abovementioned flaws. In this way, I propose to test the validity of the previously measured increasing welfare state support. The objective is to clarify whether citizens broadly support collective risk sharing and an extensive welfare state, or whether they rather support the opposite, hence increasing public support for welfare state reform policies. Therefore, this chapter examines the following question: controlling for welfare state reforms, has support for Dutch welfare state arrangements changed between 1981 and 2000, and what does this change mean? Before the hypotheses and results are discussed, the next section briefly discusses general developments within the Dutch welfare state. Then hypotheses are formulated and tested empirically.

Figure 2.1 **Support for neoliberal policy within the Dutch electorate from the 1970s onwards**



Trend in popularity of neoliberal policy from the 1970s onwards within the Dutch electorate (Pearson's r=0,52; p<0,05).

Source: Achterberg et al. (2010a: 13).

2.2 Dutch Welfare State Transformations

Transformations of the Dutch welfare state can be divided into three phases since its start in 1901. The first phase concerns the pre-war period. Pre-war social insurance programmes were usually organized at lower aggregate levels (for instance private companies or labour unions). Because of their limited re-distributional character, insurances were merely available for selective social categories. Early Dutch welfare state arrangements were comparable to private insurances.

The second phase started after the Second World War. In this phase, the universal, generous character of the Dutch welfare system was developed. Protecting vulnerable citizens against social risks became a collective responsibility. De Swaan (1988: 217-225) described the Dutch development aptly as a development that started slowly and finally 'exploded'. He argued that social security schemes in the Netherlands

were introduced later than in other European countries, but, thereafter, schemes appeared to be more generous than in neighbouring countries.

In the third phase, starting in the early 1980s, however, a rather sweeping change can be observed. The period of on-going expansion of the Dutch welfare state came to an end, as a result of enduring cutbacks (Van der Veen, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2006b). The collectivist, solidaristic system was transformed into less universal protection against social risks, lower benefit-income levels, and increasing restrictions to welfare state entitlement. This reconstruction of Dutch social security was introduced in two rounds. In the first round of cutbacks in the 1980s, the main objective was to decrease welfare expenditure. In order to attain this goal, benefit-income levels were reduced or at least frozen. This first round of Dutch welfare state transformations was successful in stabilizing welfare costs but was unsuccessful in decreasing welfare expenditure as a consequence of structural unemployment and disability. The second round of Dutch welfare state reform, with more far-reaching consequences, took place during the 1990s. Welfare state reform policies were now aimed at avoiding welfare fraud by welfare beneficiaries, employers, and public servants. Consequently, incentives were increasingly incorporated within welfare arrangements (Becker, 2000; Cox, 1998; Van der Veen, 2001). Individuals and organizations were no longer approached as passive actors, but rather as rational, calculating individuals or organizations trying to benefit as much as possible. Since then, the belief that individuals and organizations would behave in conformity with societal norms was no longer self-evident. Using mature incentives within social policy was one solution to stimulate individuals to behave in conformity with societal norms. Moreover, in this second round, the main objective of the Dutch welfare state shifted from providing a minimum income guarantee for the poor towards stimulating the poor to find a job on the labour market. Developments after this second round of welfare state reform within the third phase are beyond the scope of this study. Chapter 5 outlines detailed welfare state reform policies within different Dutch social security designs.

To conclude, over the past 25 years, the Dutch welfare state has undergone a series of policy reforms. The main goals of these policy changes were to reduce welfare costs and to increase individual responsibility. Reconstruction of the Dutch welfare state

has decreased the universality as well as the generosity of Dutch welfare arrangements. Moreover, active labour market policy has become increasingly dominant.

2.3 Hypotheses

As stated in chapter 1, welfare state legitimacy theoretically should be in danger because welfare state reform is thought to decrease citizens' personal interests in welfare arrangements, whereas empirical evidence demonstrates increasing instead of decreasing welfare state support. At the same time, benefit generosity and welfare state expenditure have decreased in the Netherlands. The question is whether welfare state support would still increase if controls for welfare state reform policies were included in the analysis. If support for a high spending and a generous welfare state decreased, and welfare states simultaneously developed in a similar manner, why would citizens stop supporting the welfare state? It is also likely that welfare austerity generates (increasing) support and that the observed increasing support for generous welfare arrangements indicates support for welfare austerity rather than for increasing welfare generosity. In sum, the question is whether increasing support for welfare arrangements actually signifies the public's response to decreasing generosity and decreasing welfare expenditure. Or in other words: do citizens continue to support welfare state arrangements *because* welfare arrangements have become increasingly austere? To answer these questions, three hypotheses are tested.

First, trends in welfare state support are re-examined. The expectation is that Dutch welfare state support increased between 1981 and 2000 *(hypothesis 2.1)*. This expectation is based on the empirical evidence discussed in chapter 1.

Next, following the developments within the Dutch welfare state described in section 2.2, I expect to find decreasing welfare state expenditure as well as decreasing welfare state generosity. A common way to measure retrenchments of welfare states is to look at welfare state expenditure (cf. Bonoli et al., 2000; Green-Pedersen, 2001; Pierson, 1994). Welfare state expenditure gives, however, only an indication of the level of welfare state expansion (or the opposite) (Green-Pedersen, 2004; Scruggs, 2006). Cuts in welfare state expenditure may for example disappear as a result of increasing

spending on active labour market policy (Martin, 2004). Other scholars have also criticized measuring cutbacks exclusively by welfare state expenditure, because welfare expenditure does not capture the level to which individuals can earn a living independently of the market (Esping-Andersen, 1990) or the changing conceptions of social rights (Cox, 1998). Clasen (2000) demonstrates that measuring welfare reform through welfare state expenditure can lead to false interpretations of welfare state reform at an in-depth level. Clasen argues that welfare state reform concerning mandatory activation programmes in Denmark were more drastic than non-compulsory activation policy in the Netherlands. However, if merely welfare state expenditure is taken into account, reform policies in the Netherlands appear to be more drastic. Therefore, in addition to welfare spending, indicators measuring benefit generosity should be considered. In order to measure welfare state reform policies at a more in-depth level, Scruggs (2006) constructed a benefit generosity index.[9] Using this indicator enables one to control welfare attitudes to changing policy contents at a more in-depth level than is possible with welfare state expenditure data. For these reasons, I use both welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity. The second expectation is that welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity have decreased in the Netherlands between 1981 and 2000 *(hypothesis 2.2)*.

Consequently, welfare state support should be re-analysed with controls for welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity. The question is whether support in the 1980s, when welfare arrangements were more generous and universal than later on, signifies the same as in the 1990s. Therefore, the third expectation is that welfare state support will decrease if welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity are statistically held constant *(hypothesis 2.3)*. That is, support can be measured independently of the possibly disturbing influence of policy changes across time.

[9] Definition: average wage, replacement rates, waiting days, and durability of welfare benefits.

2.4 Data and Measures

For the analyses in this chapter, I use data from the series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981-2000* – a longitudinal project that started in the 1970s, carried out by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP).[10] These surveys contain six questions on support for social security and one question on general welfare state support. Despite the fact that the quality of those questions is questionable because of their comprehensive nature, which makes them less informative than desired, these surveys are still valuable because identical questions were repeatedly asked over a long time period. Therefore, they are useful for examining trends in welfare state support. Another reason why I use these questions is because such questions have also predominantly been used in previous studies that demonstrated stable, high, and in the Dutch case increasing, welfare state support.

Two legitimacy indicators are used however: general support for welfare state arrangements and support for more narrow social security arrangements. A mean score of the six questions – old-age pensions, sick pay, social assistance, unemployment benefits, benefits for the disabled, and benefits for widows and orphans – on social security is used. Respondents could choose whether they believed that the benefit was 1: too good, 2: sufficient, or 3: insufficient. Higher scores on this social security variable stand for high support for generous social security schemes. General welfare state support is measured by the following question: 'Do you believe the government should have more or less money to spend on public provision?' Respondents could answer – on a 5-point Likert scale – in a range of preferences for the government to spend 1: much more money to 5: much less money. Becker (2005) determined that lower scores represent higher general support for the welfare state, and I follow this reasoning. For the sake of my analyses, scores are recalculated so that higher scores mean more support. In the analyses, a mean score of support for social security and a mean score for general support have been calculated for each year.[11]

[10] The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) is a government agency which conducts research into the social aspects of all areas of government policy.

[11] The years in which attitudes on the six social security arrangements were available are used in the analyses. These are: 1981, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2000.

The correlation between both types of support (social security support and general welfare state support) is moderate, but not significant (r = .41; ρ = .11). If these two questions measured equal attitudes, I would expect a higher correlation. General support is supposedly perceived as a more comprehensive (and maybe more distant) manner of support for the welfare state, whereas support for social security is more closely connected to personal interests in social security. Both measures of support are examined. In this way, it is also possible to test whether the effects of welfare state reform vary when welfare state support is measured at a general level, or at a somewhat more in-depth level.

In addition, I use data on trends in welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity in order to cover trends in welfare transformations. The OECD social expenditure database (SOCX) provides data on Dutch welfare state expenditure as a percentage of GDP. I use data covering overall expenditure, consisting of the following social policy fields: old age, survivors, incapacity-related benefits, health, family, active labour market programmes, unemployment, housing, and other social policy areas (not further defined by OECD). Additionally, data on benefit generosity in the Netherlands are used based on the generosity index created by Scruggs (2006). I use data covering overall benefit generosity, consisting of the sum of the generosity of unemployment benefits, sick benefits, and old-age pensions. The construction of the index for the generosity of welfare arrangements is based on Esping-Andersen's decommodification index, which Scruggs recalculated for recent years. Scruggs argues that this decommodification index actually represents generosity, denominating it the generosity index. In the analyses of welfare state support, I control for Dutch unemployment rates and GDP[12] as both can influence public opinion (Blekesaune, 2007). It is therefore common to control for these developments in welfare state legitimacy research (cf. Achterberg and Yerkes, 2009; Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Rehm, 2007).

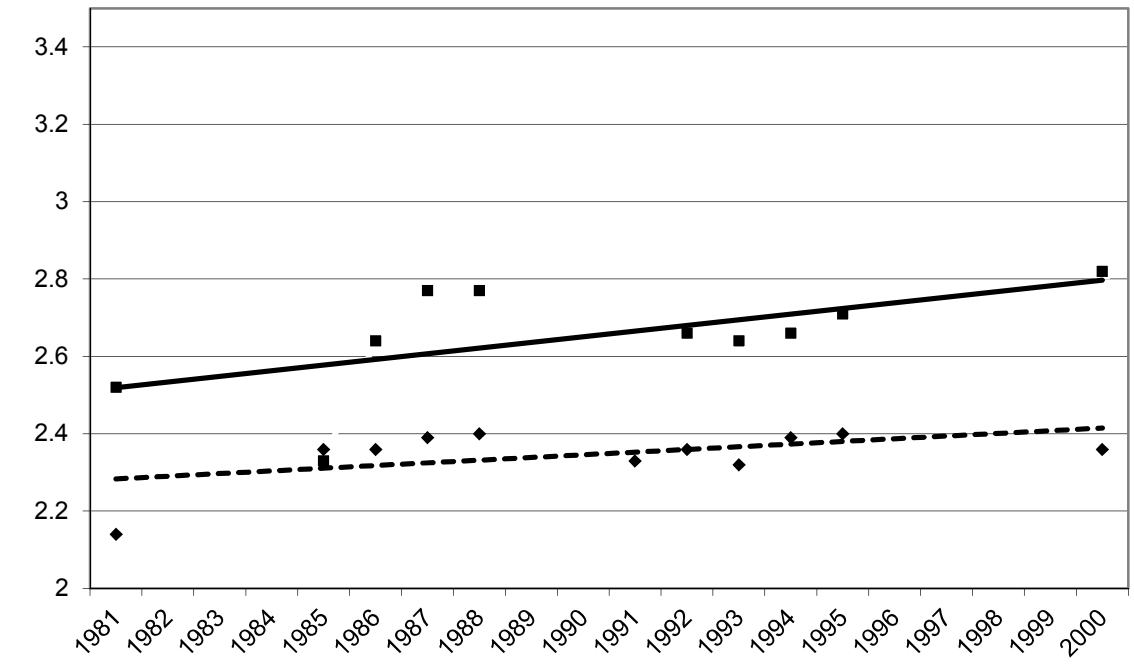
[12] Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

2.5 Results

The first hypothesis predicts an increase in welfare state support since 1981. This hypothesis is tested by calculating Pearson's correlations between year and support. The results show that both support for social security and general welfare state support increased between 1981 and 2000 (see figure 2.2). Both correlations with year prove strong (resp. *r*=.58 and *r*=.50). In conclusion: these results are as expected on the basis of the results of existing empirical studies showing high, and in the Dutch case even increasing, support. Therefore, *hypothesis 2.1* is endorsed.

The second hypothesis – predicting a decrease in welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity between 1981 and 2000 – is tested from 1981 onwards by calculating Pearson's correlations between year and welfare state expenditure and between year and benefit generosity. Figure 2.3 illustrates that both welfare state expenditure and

Figure 2.2 Trends in welfare state support in the Netherlands (1981-2000)



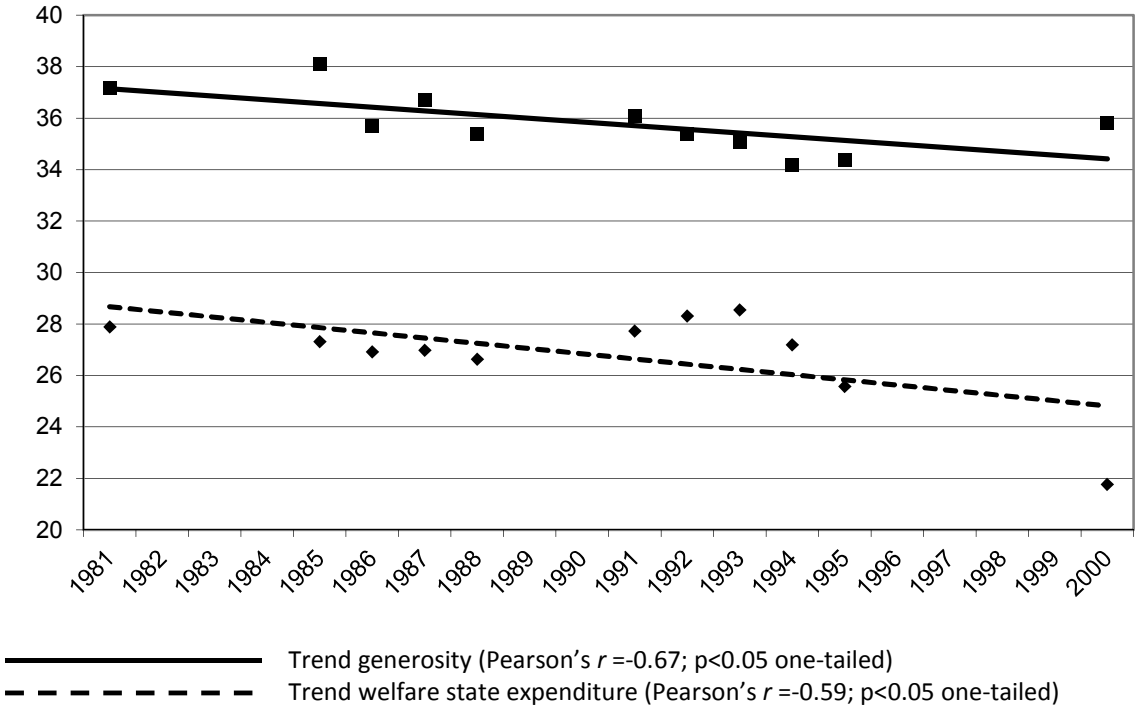
Trend in general support (Pearson's *r* = 0.58; p<0.05 one-tailed)

Trend in support social security (Pearson's *r* =0.50; p<0.05 one-tailed)

Source: *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981-2000*, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)

benefit generosity indeed decreased significantly between 1981 and 2000. The different periods of welfare reform mentioned above can be discerned in developments in benefit generosity rather than in developments in welfare state expenditure. In the late 1980s, welfare state expenditure increased, whereas reforms were aimed at decreasing welfare state expenditure. However, the second, more drastic, round of Dutch welfare state reform that took place in the early 1990s is reflected by a decrease in welfare state expenditure. Interestingly, trends in welfare state expenditure also cover spending on active labour market policy, which increased in the investigated period. Were this not included, welfare state expenditure in the Netherlands would have decreased even more.[13] Benefit generosity, however, indeed decreased between 1981 and 2000, in accordance with the ups and downs as outlined in section 2.2. A comparison between

Figure 2.3 Trends in welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity in the Netherlands (1981–2000)



Sources: OECD social expenditure database (SOCX); generosity index, Scruggs (2006)

[13] In 1980, expenditure on active labour market policy was 0.58 per cent of GDP, which increased to 1.5 per cent of GDP in 2001. Total public social expenditure decreased from 26.9 per cent of GDP in 1980 to 21.9 per cent in 2001. That is, total expenditure would have decreased by an additional 1.5 per cent if expenditure on active labour market policy was excluded.

support and welfare state reform (welfare state expenditure and welfare state generosity) demonstrates opposing trends (compare figures 2.1 and 2.2), indicating a negative correlation between support and policy developments. To conclude: the results reveal that welfare state expenditure as well as benefit generosity decreased quite strongly between 1981 and 2000. *Hypothesis 2.2* should, therefore, be endorsed.

So far, the results demonstrate that both support for social security and general welfare state support increased between 1981 and 2000. Furthermore, welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity decreased in the Netherlands between 1981 and 2000. Previously cited studies do not analyse this any further. They conclude that developments in public attitudes contradict developments of welfare policy. Moreover, these scholars assume that these opposing developments result in increasing support. As stated before, that is not sufficient. The next step needed is to re-analyse support, while keeping welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity statistically constant. The third hypothesis is tested by calculating partial correlation (see table 2.1). Independent variables (year and support in this study) are not by definition independent of other variables (here: welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity), a partial correlation corrects for this potential influence of other variables. Moreover, the analyses are controlled for GDP and unemployment rates. GDP increased and unemployment rates decreased between 1981 and 2000 in the Netherlands (see figure 1.1). This means that the influence of rising prosperity and increasing employment is deducted from the correlation between year and support.

First, I control just for welfare state expenditure, thereafter only for benefit generosity. That demonstrates whether benefit generosity or welfare state expenditure is more influential in determining the level of support. The results show, as expected, that the effect of benefit generosity on support is higher than the effect of welfare state expenditure. When welfare state expenditure is held statistically constant, support for social security increases even more than without this control. However, the parameters of general support become insignificant (and the sign switches from plus to minus). If benefit generosity is held statistically constant, the parameters for support for social security become insignificant, and general welfare state support decreases. This demonstrates that benefit generosity influences general welfare state support to a

Table 2.1 Trends in welfare state support controlled for welfare state expenditure and generosity (1981-2000; significance is listed in parenthesis; one-tailed)

	Zero order correlation	Controlled for expenditure	**Controlled for generosity**	Controlled for exp. and generosity
Support in general (n=11)	0.58 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.43)	**-0.65 (0.04)**	-0.65 (0.06)
Support social security (n=11)	0.50 (0.06)	0.73 (0.02)	**0.46 (0.13)**	0.63 (0.07)

Sources: *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981–2000*, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP); OECD social expenditure database (SOCX); generosity index Scruggs (2006)
Note: In all analyses, I control for GDP and unemployment rates.

higher degree than welfare state expenditure. Moreover, this indicates that support for welfare austerity increased rather than support for generous welfare state arrangements. Thus, general support for the welfare state decreases when benefit generosity is held constant.

Subsequently, a second-order correlation was calculated, controlled for both welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity. These results are less convincing than controlling for benefit generosity alone. Hence, in examining popular support for social security and for the welfare state in general, it seems more important to control for developments in benefit generosity than for developments in welfare state expenditure.[14] It is worth noting that the effects of reform on general welfare state support and support for social security reveal remarkable differences. General welfare state support decreases if benefit generosity is held constant, whereas support for social security remains stable. That might be explained by citizens' personal interest in social security, since in the Netherlands over 90 per cent of citizens perceive that they profit from social security in one way or another (Van Oorschot, 2002). Conversely, citizens decreasingly support the welfare state in general, indicating that solidarity towards other citizens (at more distance) has changed. In chapter 4, support for citizens at more distance is examined in greater detail.

[14] Note that generosity data include more years but fewer countries than data on welfare state expenditure. Therefore, in comparing countries, one might favour controlling for expenditure rather than for benefit generosity in order to maximize sample sizes.

In conclusion, *hypothesis 2.3* is confirmed. On the basis of the analyses above, it is more likely that citizens increasingly support welfare state reform policies and not, as is often assumed in the literature, a generous (and protecting) welfare state. The relationship is obviously more complex than assumed in other studies.

2.6 Conclusion and Discussion

The research reported in this chapter reveals first of all that serious doubts could be raised in regard to studies demonstrating stable, high, or increasing, welfare state legitimacy across time. The results demonstrate that support for general welfare state arrangements or for social security arrangements does not by definition signify support for generous and extensive arrangements, as is assumed in previous studies. The trend in support for welfare state arrangements or social security arrangements cannot be sufficiently measured by a simple correlation between support and year, or by partial correlations controlled for GDP and unemployment rates. This chapter demonstrates that it is important to control for welfare state reform policies as well, because attitudes and real policy are intertwined. Consequent to the analyses conducted in this chapter, general support for the welfare state decreases when controlled for developments in benefit generosity. Therefore, it is likely that the public at large supports decreasing generosity rather than increasing generosity, in contrast to what is assumed in previous studies (cf. Becker, 2005; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Van Oorschot, 2002). However, prudence is in order. Data are disputable – what is actually measured by the survey questions? In addition, the number of observations is small (see also the appendix to this chapter). Nonetheless, in spite of all that, these results force us to have serious doubts about statements of high and stable, or in regard to the Netherlands even increasing, support for generous welfare arrangements. If we want to understand welfare state legitimacy, we need to understand support for welfare state reform, because perceptions about welfare state arrangements are strongly intertwined with the actual policy designs.

To conclude, a first attempt to look in more detail at the meaning of welfare state support is presented in this chapter, with a strong emphasis on *first attempt*, because I examined two rather general measures for welfare state support, and support for welfare state reform is examined in an indirect manner (via preferences to increase or decrease benefit-income levels or spending on general welfare arrangements). In order to understand public support for the welfare state in more depth, support for welfare state reform policies should be examined in more detail. Moreover, support should not be examined at a general level, because support for different reform dimensions could vary. The next chapter addresses these issues.

Appendix to Chapter 2

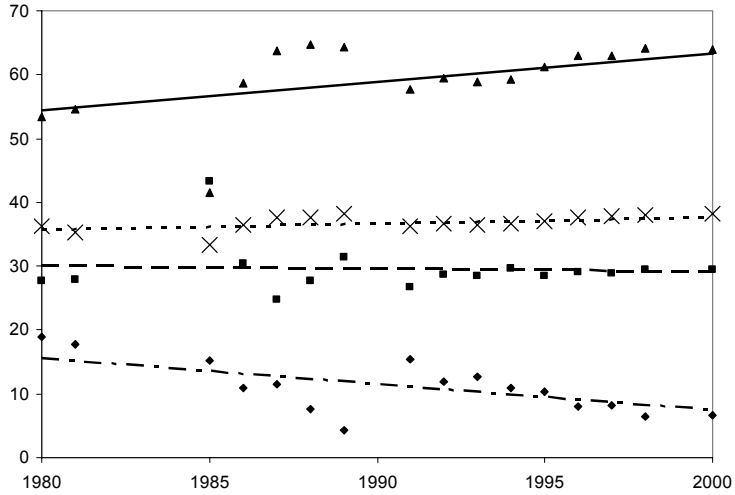
For the empirical testing of the hypotheses formulated in chapter 2, data from the series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981–2000* were used. These are repeated surveys executed by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). These surveys contain one question on general welfare state support. *General support for the welfare state* is measured using the following question: Do you believe the government should have more or less money to spend on public provision? This question could be answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1: much less, 2: less, 3: the same amount, 4: more, 5: much more). Becker (2005) uses the mean answer to this question to measure support for the welfare state, specifying that higher scores stand for more support for the welfare state in general.

In chapter 2, an identical method has been used. However, there are arguments against that method of working. It is also possible to three-part the answers to this question into those preferring to spend more (scores 4 and 5), those preferring to spend less (scores 1 and 2), and those who do not want to change spending. People who favour increasing spending would not support welfare austerity, people who favour no changes in spending would support existing, less generous welfare arrangements, and people who favour decreasing spending would support on-going welfare austerity. The answers to this three-part division of the question are presented in figure A2.1. This figure demonstrates that support increases when Becker's definition is used, support is then defined as the mean score on this question. If the question is divided into three categories instead of using the average, support for increasing spending goes up, whereas support for decreasing spending goes down. Does that mean the public does not support welfare austerity? Given that the Dutch welfare state has become increasingly austere, the question is again how these results should be interpreted. Just as in chapter 2, table A2.1 presents results when support is controlled for welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity.

The answer is that support for increasing government spending has increased, because real welfare state expenditure as well as benefit generosity have decreased. The Dutch apparently do not support this increasing austerity. In other words, the previously observed support for austerity of the Dutch welfare state disappears as soon

as categorization of the question differs, and then the Dutch seem to be against welfare austerity (although the differences are minimal in this regard). In sum, more and improved research is necessary. Existing data are disputable and not unambiguous. A start has been made to do so in the remaining chapters of this study.

Figure A2.1 Trends in attitudes on more or less welfare state expenditure and in support (1981–2000)



More money; increases (Pearson's r=0.55)*
Average (=Support according to Becker 2005); increases (Pearson's r=0,55)*
*Less money; decreases (Pearson's r= -0,69 **)*
An equal amount of money; remains stable (Pearson's r=-0,08)

Source: *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981–2000*, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)

Table A.2.1 Trends welfare state support controlled for welfare state expenditure and benefit generosity (1981-2000)

	Zero order correlation	Controlled for expenditure	Controlled for generosity	Controlled for expenditure and generosity
Support for more money (n=18)	0.55	0.27	0.18	-0.08
Support for an equal amount of money	-0.08	-0.13	0.34	0.26
Support for less money	-0.69	-0.29	-0.55	-0.19
Average support	0.55	0.13	0.21	-0.21

Sources: *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1981–2000*, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP); OECD social expenditure database (SOCX); Generosity index, Scruggs (2006

Chapter 3

Support for Welfare State Reform

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 demonstrated that it is hard to separate welfare state support from support for welfare reform. We saw that what is often interpreted as support for generous welfare arrangements could equally signify support for welfare state reform. Hence, in order to understand welfare state support, it is imperative to understand support for welfare state reform. Therefore, the current chapter addresses support for welfare state reform.

In the literature on welfare state reform, much attention has been paid to the retrenchment of the welfare state. In its broadest sense, retrenchment means cutting social expenditure (Bonoli et al., 2000; Pallier, 2003: 105; Pierson, 1994: 17). The way retrenchment is used in the literature presumes that retrenchment summarizes all welfare state reforms, but it is too general a term to be used for a detailed analysis. In other words, reform is generally considered to be one dimensional. However, the actual policies of welfare state reform can be characterized by four different but interconnected transformations (compare Gilbert, 2004; Van der Veen, 2009). The first major transition that welfare states go through is *privatization*[15]; this basically entails less emphasis on the role of the state in delivering social protection and more on the role of the market and private organizations (see also Houtepen and Meulen, 2000). Second, there is increasing *selectivity*; this implies a restriction of universal social rights to an ever-more select group of people in need of social and economic support (see also Clasen and Oorschot, 2002). In this way, governments try to confine support to those

[15] In the sense of Van der Veen's (2009) definition of privatization, referring to the privatization of social risks, rather than Gilbert's (2004) definition, which refers to the privatization of social services.

who really need it. Third, services are increasingly directed at *activation* in order to enhance labour market participation. The main objective is to prevent dependency on welfare or social security. Finally, the rights to social security are increasingly combined with certain obligations (Turner, 1997), expressed in a tendency to *discipline* those who are dependent on the welfare state to an increasing degree. If people do not comply with these increased obligations, they may be sanctioned, for example by cutting their benefits, in order to coerce them into more desired behaviour. Therefore, in theory, the broad concept of retrenchment captures different reform dimensions. Consequently, it is likely that the public at large also distinguishes between support for different types of reform and may support them for different reasons. If support for reform depends on the type of reform, some types may be broadly supported, whereas others may not be.

In regard to public preferences, we know that welfare state support is not a one-dimensional, but rather a multidimensional concept (cf. Gelissen, 2000; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Kangas, 1997; Roller, 1995; Taylor-Gooby, 1982; Van Oorschot and Meuleman, 2011). Roller's (1995) distinction between welfare extensity – the degree to which tasks and policy areas should be a responsibility for governments – and welfare intensity – questions of how much a government should spend on specific policy areas – is very familiar. Yet, only the latter concept has generally been used to measure legitimacy in the studies discussed in chapters 1 and 2. However, support for both dimensions varies, and they are also explained differently (Gelissen, 2000). Also, Van Oorschot and Meuleman (2011) demonstrate that welfare state attitudes are multidimensional. They demonstrate that the public differentiates between varying negative and positive aspects of the welfare state.

As welfare state support is not a one-dimensional variable, support for welfare state reform is probably not either. A study comparing attitudes in Sweden and in Britain demonstrates that the public at large indeed distinguishes between different reform dimensions – Svallfors denominates them 'dimensions of inequality'. The public seems to differentiate between support for reform concerning government's responsibilities to correct market outcomes and reform that increases obligations (Svallfors, 1993). In the context of the above mentioned characterization of the four types of reform, in Svallfors´ study, the public hence discerns between reform involving increasing

privatization and reform focusing on increasingly disciplining welfare beneficiaries. Svallfors, however, does not examine reform in relation to increasing selectivity and labour market activation, the other types of reform observable within actual policies. Also, many items that Svallfors uses do not directly capture support for reform.[16] Nonetheless, this study points out that it is likely that the public distinguishes between support for varying types of reform. In short, in order to get below the surface of welfare state support, an investigation of different dimensions of support for welfare reform is imperative; otherwise, vagueness remains about what public support signifies.

Moreover, the ideological structure and basis of support for reform, and different dimensions thereof, can vary as well. As argued in chapter 1, economic self-interest is often assumed to be the main motive for rejecting – or supporting – retrenchment (cf. Pierson, 1994; 2001b). However, if the public distinguishes between different types of reform, some types of reform may be broadly rejected because they conflict with people's economic self-interest, whereas others may be supported, despite possibly decreasing economic self-interest, for example because the reform matches with people's values or justice principles. Traditionally, welfare state support is explained by economic or class interest (cf. De Swaan, 1988; Korpi, 1983; Lipset, 1960; Van Oorschot, 2002). Yet, in *some cases* the public is very supportive of policies from which they do not personally benefit (Etzioni, 1987; Gilens, 1999; Kangas, 1997; Mau, 2003; Papadakis, 1993; Peillon, 1996; Van Oorschot, 2002). To give an example: the American middle class, who in general are not much in favour of the welfare state, support means-tested social policies targeted at the poor in some cases.[17] Gilens (1999: 42-45) demonstrates that this support depends strongly on perceptions of the conduct of the poor who rely on welfare. Means-tested social policy targeted at the poor whom the public at large believes to be doing all they can to become independent of the benefit is broadly supported. On the other hand, means-tested policy targeted at the

[16] To give an example: the item 'people who would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid extra for it' measures work ethic rather than support for reform that increases obligations (compare Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989). Moreover, the item 'it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between the rich and the poor' measures support for welfare extensity (compare Roller, 1995), rather than support for a specific type of reform.

[17] This contradicts the thesis that the public is only supportive of universal welfare state arrangements because of self-interest (cf. Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Wilensky, 1975).

inner-city (black) poor receives little support. This latter policy is unpopular because the public believes these inner-city (black) poor are undeserving because they would prefer to rely on welfare instead of supporting themselves (cf. Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Gilens, 1999; Wilson, 1987). So, Gilens demonstrates that support for benefits from which one does not personally benefit is conditional. Hence, determinants of support for welfare state reform presumably vary depending on the type of policy considered.

In short, two questions need to be answered. First, which and how many dimensions of support for welfare state reform does the public at large distinguish? Second, why does the public at large support the varying types of reform of the welfare state? The next section reviews literature on welfare state reform and results in two testable hypotheses. Thereafter, I explore the extent to which economic self-interest, egalitarianism, and four criteria that the public, in theory, uses to assess who should receive state aid influences support for reform.

3.2 Multidimensionality of Support for Welfare State Reform

3.2.1 Welfare State Reform Dimensions

Within the broad concept of retrenchment, it is possible to distinguish two fundamental types of welfare state reform (Bernts, 1991; Houtman, 1997; Houtman et al., 2008). On the one hand, retrenchment can lead to distributive reform – which in an era of retrenchment refers to decreasing redistribution. This type of reform generally decreases social rights and social protection. On the other hand, retrenchment can also lead to commodifying reform – which in an era of retrenchment refers to a more activating, recommodifying welfare state in which arrangements can be seen as an investment in human capital in order to avoid long-lasting dependencies (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Taylor-Gooby, 1997). Commodifying reform points to a changing logic of welfare policies: recommodifying policies no longer protect people by providing them with social security outside the labour market (decommodification); rather, they focus on stimulating and facilitating individuals to participate in the labour market in return for receiving financial support. The processes of distributive reform and commodifying

reform are to some extent ideologically contradictory. Distributive reform leads to fewer public, collective responsibilities, and less state intervention. Commodifying reform leads to more collective responsibilities and to more state intervention. Yet, despite their contradictory nature, a main objective within both types of reform is welfare state retrenchment – in the short run with distributive reform and in the long run with commodifying reform. Moreover, in a country such as the Netherlands, these processes have occurred more or less simultaneously (Arts, 2004; Van Oorschot, 2006b).

Distributive and commodifying reforms can easily be observed within the reforms that characterize actual welfare policies. Two transformations, increasing *privatization* of social protection and increasing *selectivity* within protection*,* converge towards distributive reform. Both *privatization* and *selectivity* decrease the level of income redistribution and therefore result in distributive reform. Distributive reform leads to a decrease in *distributive justice,* because government responsibilities in regard to (re)distributing incomes from the rich to the poor decrease. The remaining types of reform visible within actual policies, increasing labour market *activation* and *disciplining* those who are dependent on the welfare state*,* converge towards commodifying reform. Reforms involving *activation* and increasing *discipline* are both guided by the principle of reciprocal justice, because social security entitlements become increasingly conditional. If welfare beneficiaries do not meet the increased obligations, they may not receive the full amount of the relevant benefit.

The question is whether the public at large also views the four processes that Gilbert and Van der Veen distinguish within the actual policies as two ideological dimensions. In order to examine this, two hypotheses are tested. First, I expect that preferences for increasing selectivity and privatization can be reduced to one dimension capturing support for distributive reform (*hypothesis 3.1a*).[18] Consequently, I expect that people who support privatization also support greater selectivity in welfare programmes – as opposed to those who reject privatization and who will probably also reject increasing selectivity. Second, I expect that preferences for increasing activation and

[18] It is a matter of argument whether these are hypotheses. In my opinion they are, because I test the expectation that these opinions can be summarized by two dimensions (distributive and commodifying reform), not by one (retrenchment) or four (transformations within the actual policies) dimensions. However, these hypotheses are not the 'if this, then that' type of hypotheses, which according to some scholars is the only correct way to formulate hypotheses.

discipline can be reduced to one dimension capturing support for recommodification (*hypothesis 3.1b*). That is, people who support increasing activation will probably also agree with increasing discipline. Likewise, those rejecting activation will probably reject increasing discipline as well.

In conclusion, I expect that support for welfare reform is multidimensional and that two ideological dimensions – one leading to distributive reform and one leading to commodifying reform – can be distinguished within Dutch support for welfare reform.

3.2.2 Explaining Support for Welfare State Reform

Traditionally, class or economic self-interest is the most frequently used explanation for welfare state support (De Beer, 2007; De Swaan, 1988; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Korpi, 1983; Leisering and Leibfried, 1999; Lipset, 1960; Pierson, 1994; Rehm, 2007). The main argument is that those who have a vulnerable socioeconomic position tend to support welfare and social security to a greater extent than those who have a strong socioeconomic position. Or as Svallfors puts it: '… people who by virtue of their greater assets are the market winners will look upon the market's transactions as more legitimate and be less inclined to redress market's distributions than those who wield less power upon the market' (Svallfors, 2007a: 189). Scholars examining welfare state legitimacy empirically indeed demonstrate that one's socio economic status explains legitimacy. Support is higher when one has more to gain from welfare (cf. Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Gelissen, 2000; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Jæger, 2006a; Svallfors, 2007a). In regard to support for welfare state reform, economic self-interest would presumably lead some people to reject both distributive and commodifying reform, because less generous and more conditional welfare entitlements are not in their economic self-interest.

Secondly, egalitarianism, defined as a person's ideological values about economic equality/inequality and about economic redistribution (Middendorp, 1991; Svallfors, 1991), is often argued to explain individual welfare state support (Albrekt Larsen, 2008a; Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Breznau, 2010). These values are in general closely connected to economic self-interest, because economic self-interest drives ideology to a fair extent (compare for example the discussion in Hasenfeld and Rafferty 1989).

Therefore, people with weak economic positions usually tend to adhere more to an economic egalitarian ideology (Achterberg et al., Submitted; De Witte, 1997; Marshall, Newby, Rose, and Vogler, 1988; Svallfors, 1991; Wright, 1985). Conversely, people in stronger economic positions usually tend to support laissez-faire values and market liberalism (economic anti-egalitarianism) rather than a strong and expensive welfare state. That is, values of economic egalitarianism are expected to relate to self-interest.[19]

In addition to economic self-interest and economic egalitarianism, four criteria condition welfare state support, and therefore presumably also condition support for welfare reform. Van Oorschot (2000b) reviewed the literature in order to distinguish the criteria that the public at large uses to judge whether someone should receive state aid. He concludes that four criteria – beneficiaries' level of neediness, their control over neediness, identification with 'out'-groups, and beneficiaries' level of compliance [20] – are relevant. A first condition for support is that welfare beneficiaries are perceived to be needy. Of old, an important purpose of welfare states is to provide a minimum income guarantee for the poor (Marshall, 1964; Van Doorn, 1982). Moreover, according to (Goodin, 1988: 27-50), the justification for the welfare state depends on the extent to which people's needs are met. In sum, the less vulnerable welfare beneficiaries are perceived to be, the higher support will be for reform that decreases income redistribution and increases recommodification.

A second condition for support is that beneficiaries lack control over their neediness; this refers to the extent to which the poor themselves bear responsibility for their poverty. Cook (1979) argues that 'the locus of control' is the most important determinant for support. The poor whose poverty is perceived to be self-inflicted receive little support (Appelbaum, 2002; Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Will, 1993). So, the more one believes that welfare beneficiaries have control over their neediness, the

[19] However, people in stronger economic positions also support egalitarianism in some cases. I test the extent to which these values are connected to economic self-interest. The results, however, will expose the extent to which people in stronger economic positions tend to support economic egalitarianism.

[20] In the original text, Van Oorschot distinguishes five criteria. Reciprocity, the fifth criterion, is examined in detail in chapter 5, where the macro–micro link is addressed. Moreover, I changed 'attitude' into compliance, because attitude is such a comprehensive, and therefore rather meaningless, conception.

higher the support will be for decreasing redistribution and increasing recommodification.

A third criterion that influences support is the level to which one can identify oneself with 'out'-groups, meaning perceptions of whether the poor belong to one's 'in'-group (high level of identification) or to one's 'out'-group (low level of identification). Varying scholars have argued and/or demonstrated that those who identify themselves with 'out'-groups support welfare state arrangements to a greater extent than those who cannot (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; De Swaan, 1988; Harris, 2002; Mayhew, 1971; Van Oorschot, 2000b). Perceptions on which social categories belong to one's 'out'-group or to one's 'in'-group vary. Some people consider others who do not work as members of their 'out'-group, because a norm that has become rather dominant across time is that one should be self-supporting and work to provide an income (Houtman, 1994; Mead, 1992). For others, people who are culturally different (ethnic minorities) belong to their 'out'-group (Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders, 2002; Van Oorschot, 2000b). In this chapter, I use the latter definition, ethnic minorities, to characterize 'out'-groups (chapter 4 examines the former). In sum, the less people can identify themselves with 'out-'groups, the higher support will be for reform towards less redistribution and more recommodification.

Finally, compliance or, in other words, honest and grateful behaviour of beneficiaries is the last precondition for support. An unintended consequence of the welfare state is welfare fraud, caused by the well-known free-rider problem among others (Hechter, 1987). As a consequence of rather unconditional and generous welfare arrangements in the golden age of most Western welfare states, violation of the welfare system was argued to be considerable (Murray, 1984), and the public at large also believed and still believes that welfare fraud is relatively high (Becker, 2005; Coughlin, 1980: 113–117; Goul Andersen, 1999; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1985: 132–133). Consequently, the extent to which a beneficiary is compliant has become a criterion that the public uses to judge whether someone should receive financial help from the state. In sum, the lower the perceived extent of welfare beneficiaries' compliance, the higher support for both types of welfare reform will be.

However, some of these criteria are expected to relate strongly to economic self-interest, and in turn to economic egalitarianism. Ever since Marx's (1967 [1867]) seminal work about the dynamics of capitalism, politics has been primarily conceived as driven by class-based economic interest. Lower-income groups traditionally vote for leftist parties (Alford, 1967; Lipset, 1981: 234). 'The simplest explanation for this widespread pattern is simple economic self-interest. The leftist parties represent themselves as instruments of social change in the direction of equality; the lower-income groups support them in order to become economically better off, while the higher-income groups oppose them in order to maintain their economic advantages' (Lipset, 1981: 239). Hence, leftist parties generally strive to reach equality of income (egalitarianism) by targeting welfare benefits towards needy citizens who do not bear personal responsibility for their neediness. That is, perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness and their control over their neediness presumably relate to economic egalitarianism. The remaining criteria, identification with 'out'-groups and compliance of beneficiaries, presumably do not relate to economic egalitarianism, because self-interest probably has a weak relationship with these criteria. However, in regard to the identification criterion, one could argue that egalitarian people tend to identify themselves with poor people. In this chapter, however, I do not expect this relationship, because I define 'out'-groups as people who are culturally different (ethnic minorities). People who are less educated are, on the one hand, expected to adhere to an economic egalitarian ideology. On the other hand, however, people who have a vulnerable socioeconomic position due to a low educational level tend to be least supportive towards state aid targeted at ethnic minorities; this indicates that welfare chauvinism is highest among the less educated (Van der Waal, Achterberg, Houtman, De Koster, and Manevska, 2010; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Van Oorschot, 2006a). Therefore, I do not expect identification with 'out'-groups to relate to economic (anti-)egalitarianism.

In short, two sets of hypotheses should be tested. A first set should test the extent to which economic self-interest, economic egalitarianism, and the four criteria used by the public to judge who should receive state aid are intertwined. A second set should test the relative influence of the determinants of support for distributive and commodifying reform. In regard to distributive reform, it is first of all likely that the

mechanism of economic self-interest leads to either economic egalitarianism or anti-egalitarianism. Moreover, it is also likely that economic egalitarianism leads to perceptions that welfare beneficiaries are needy and bear no responsibility (control) for their neediness. However, it is not likely that economic egalitarianism leads to perceptions that welfare beneficiaries are compliant or belong to one's 'in'-group (identification). Consequently, the following hypotheses are tested. First, people who have vulnerable socioeconomic positions (welfare dependent, low income, low educational level, young, and a woman) are expected to adhere to economic egalitarianism; this in turn leads them to have lower support for distributive reform than those in stronger socioeconomic positions (*hypothesis 3.2a*). Second, economic self-interest, via egalitarianism, also leads to the expectation that those in weak socioeconomic positions will support commodifying reform to a lesser extent than those in strong socioeconomic positions (*hypothesis 3.2b*). Moreover, economic egalitarianism is expected to relate to perceptions of welfare beneficiaries' neediness and of their level of control over neediness. People supporting economic egalitarianism are expected to believe that welfare beneficiaries are needy and do not bear responsibility (control) for their neediness; this in turn leads them to have lower support for distributive reform than those supporting anti-egalitarianism (*hypothesis 3.2c*). Also, people who support economic egalitarianism are expected to believe that welfare beneficiaries are needy and do not bear responsibility (control) for their neediness; this in turn leads them to have lower[21] support for commodifying reform than those supporting anti-egalitarianism (*hypothesis 3.2d*). However, support for economic egalitarianism is probably not related to the two remaining criteria, identification with 'out'-groups and beneficiaries' compliance. Consequently, identification and beneficiaries' compliance are expected to affect support for reform independently. Hence, people who cannot identify themselves with 'out'-groups and believe welfare beneficiaries are not compliant will support distributive reform to a greater extent than those who can identify themselves with 'out'-groups and trust them (*hypothesis 3.2e*). Also, people who cannot identify

[21] I expect less support for recommodification because of this, and not more support because, in regard to the 'deserving' poor, support is expected to be rather unconditional. Since recommodification entails increasingly conditional welfare arrangements, I expect that people who believe welfare beneficiaries are needy, and cannot control this neediness, do not prefer conditional reform.

themselves with 'out'-groups and do not believe welfare beneficiaries are compliant will support commodifying reform to a greater extent than those who can identify themselves with 'out'-groups and believe welfare beneficiaries are compliant (*hypothesis 3.2f*).

The second set of hypotheses concentrates on overall explanations for support for both types of reform. In regard to distributive reform, mainly perceptions of beneficiaries' neediness will presumably influence support for distributive reform. Of old, providing a minimum income guarantee for the needy was a prominent objective of welfare states in their golden age. Because of distributive reform, in which redistribution decreases, the objectives of the old welfare state have changed somewhat. However, within contemporary reform, covering risks of needy people is still an important objective of welfare states. Despite the fact that distributive reform is guided by decreasing distributive justice, those in true need are still entitled to welfare arrangements. In relation to public opinion, the justification for redistributive justice lies in protecting needy and vulnerable people (Goodin, 1988: 27-50). That is, the public at large would supposedly perceive distributive reform as unjust if it affects those who are perceived to be needy. In regard to the other criteria, it is unclear whether they influence reform. Distributive reform does not explicitly enforce deserving behaviour defined by the remaining criteria. Several scholars examining the relationship between social policy and public opinion demonstrate that public opinion usually does not deviate much from actual policy[22] (Mau, 2003; Sharp, 1999; see also chapter 5 of this study). Therefore, I do not expect the remaining criteria to influence support for distributive reform. The following expectation is therefore tested: those who believe that welfare beneficiaries are needy reject distributive reform to a greater extent than those who do not believe that beneficiaries are needy (*hypothesis 3.3a*).

In regard to support for recommodification, all four criteria are expected to affect support. The logic of commodifying reform deviates from the logic of distributive

[22] Regardless of the direction of causality, which is another interesting, yet difficult, field of research (see chapter 6 of this book; compare also Raven, 2011; Raven et al., 2011).

reform and is in contrast also typified as 'new welfarism.' This new welfarism[23] is guided by reciprocal justice, because social benefits are increasingly conditional on someone's (prior) efforts (Taylor-Gooby, 1997: 171). However, protecting people who are vulnerable to social risks is still an objective within commodifying reform (if it was not, the welfare state would be abolished rather than reformed). Consequently, commodifying reform is not specifically targeted at the poor in true need. The remaining three criteria, however, are expected to affect support for commodifying reform as well. The reciprocal justice that guides commodifying reform forces welfare beneficiaries to adjust their conduct in conformity with the dominant work ethos prevailing in society (Mead, 1992), meaning among other things that they are compliant, try to be self-supporting, and bear no responsibility for their neediness. Again in relation to public opinion, the justification for commodifying reforms is reciprocal justice: punishing those who do not obey the rules and rewarding those who do (Achterberg et al., Submitted; Mau, 2004; Ullrich, 2002). Since these criteria are expected to explain support for commodifying reform, the following expectation is tested: people who can identify themselves with 'out'-groups, believe welfare beneficiaries are needy, not in control of their neediness, and compliant support recommodification to a lesser extent than those who cannot identify themselves with 'out'-groups, believe welfare beneficiaries are not needy, in control of their neediness, and not compliant (*hypothesis 3.3b*).

3.3 Data and Measures

In order to test the hypotheses proposed above, I use data from the survey *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security) collected in the Netherlands in November and December 2006. These data stem from a representative data panel collected by the Centerdata research bureau. A total of 2,682 individuals were selected to participate in the study, of which 1,972 respondents completed the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 73 per cent. A comparison of data from the survey with official statistics from *Statistics Netherlands* (*Centraal Bureau voor de*

[23] The terms 'old' and 'new' suggest that the 'new welfarism' replaces the 'old.' However, as argued in section 3.2, both types exist simultaneously, 'old welfarism' relates to distributive reform, 'new welfarism' relates to commodifying reform.

Statistiek: Central Statistics Office) demonstrates a slight overrepresentation of older people, higher income groups, and higher educational groups, which is corrected by using a weighting factor in the sample.[24]

3.3.1 Dimensions of Support for Welfare State Reform

In order to measure dimensions of support for welfare state reform, I follow Achterberg et al.'s (2010a) operationalizations of the four policy transformations in actual policies. Support for *privatization* is measured by a series of five items tapping into support for collective governmental intervention (versus private responsibility) for a number of social security risks. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale for each social security risk whether they thought that insurance against negative consequences of these risks should be 1: totally enforced by the government to 5: left to each citizen for him or herself. Table A3.1 (in the appendix to chapter 3) demonstrates that these five questions could be taken together in a scale tapping into support for less governmental responsibility and for more individual responsibility in issues of social security. Higher scores on this scale stand for more support for privatization.[25]

To measure the public's support for (increasing) *selectivity*, respondents were asked to react to items about the distribution of financial resources to specific categories. First, six questions were asked about whether they agree with a reduction in old-age pensions for those who have alternative financial resources, such as people who have a working partner, people who live with their children, or who have lots of savings on the bank. These questions could be answered by 1: no, 2: don't know, and 3: yes. Table A3.2 (in the appendix to chapter 3) shows that these six questions could be taken together in a scale tapping into support for more selectivity. Higher scores on this scale stand for more support for selectivity regarding old-age pensions.[26] Second, since the aforementioned measure focuses too much on old-age pensions, respondents were asked how welfare benefits in general, state pensions, and child support should be distributed – should higher income groups receive more because they contributed more,

[24] Not weighting, though, does not yield any substantially different results than those reported here.
[25] Respondents were assigned a scale score if they had valid scores on at least four of five items.
[26] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least four out of six items.

should they receive the same as lower income groups, or should lower income groups receive more because they need it more? Table A3.3 (in the appendix to chapter 3) demonstrates that these three questions and the aforementioned scale pertaining to support for more selectivity for state pensions could be taken together in a scale tapping into support for more selectivity. Higher scores on this scale stand for more support for selectivity.[27]

To measure support for *labour market activation*, respondents were asked to respond to three Likert-type items about the obligations of welfare beneficiaries to pay society back by doing some kind of work in return (answerable on a scale from 1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree). Table A3.4 (in the appendix to chapter 3) illustrates that these three questions could be taken together in a scale tapping into support for more labour market activation. Higher scores on this scale stand for more support for labour market activation.[28]

To measure support for (increasing) *discipline*, respondents were asked about their opinion on six Likert-type items covering issues like the obligations and punishment of welfare beneficiaries (answerable on a scale from 1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree). Table A3.5 (in the appendix to chapter 3) demonstrates that these three questions could be taken together in a scale tapping into support for more discipline. Higher scores on this scale stand for more support for more discipline.[29]

3.3.2 Explanatory Variables

In order to test the mechanism of economic self-interest, an individual's *income, financial insecurity, welfare dependency, educational level, gender,* and *age* are measured. First, respondents were asked to indicate their *gross annual household income*. The answers are divided into 17 categories. Second, their *welfare dependency* is measured by asking the respondents whether they were dependent on a number of social security benefits (unemployment benefits, early retirement pensions, disability benefits, illness benefits, or social assistance) at the time they completed the

[27] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least three out of four indicators.
[28] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least two out of three items.
[29] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least four out of six items.

questionnaire. Respondents answering positively to one of these questions were assigned a 1, others were assigned a 0. *Educational level* was measured using the highest level attained. This variable was recoded into the number of years needed to obtain the highest level attained, yielding a variable ranging from 8 to 18. In regard to *gender*, respondent could answer whether they were a man (0) or a woman (1).

Moreover, to measure *economic egalitarianism* five items are used, similar to the items previously used by Houtman (2003). Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed (1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree) with these items. Factor analysis shows that these items could be combined into a scale (table A3.6 in the appendix to chapter 3). Higher scores on the scale stand for more support for economic egalitarianism.[30] However, Lipset (1959) argued that people in lower socio-economic positions combine economic egalitarianism (as described in section 3.2.2) and authoritarianism. Thereafter, these findings are repeatedly demonstrated by numerous other studies (Achterberg and Houtman, 2009; Converse, 2006; Evans, Heath, and Lalljee, 1996; Feldman, 1988; Lipset, 1959; Middendorp, 1991). Both egalitarian and authoritarian values – defined by support for social order and rejection of deviant life-styles – influence the public's attitudes to welfare arrangements (Achterberg, Houtman, and Derks, 2011; Achterberg et al., 2010a) as well as on their political preferences (Achterberg and Houtman, 2006; Derks, 2006; Houtman et al., 2008). Therefore, the analyses statistically control for support for authoritarian values. To measure authoritarianism, I used a 7-item selection from the F-scale for authoritarianism by Adorno et al. (1950, previously used by Achterberg and Houtman, 2009). Respondents could indicate whether they agreed (1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree) with these statements. Factor analysis shows that these items could be combined into a scale (Table A3.7 in the appendix to chapter 3). Higher scores on the scale stand for higher support for authoritarian values.[31]

In order to measure the four criteria *neediness, control over neediness, identification with 'out'-groups,* and *beneficiaries' compliance,* a factor analysis by generalized least squares was conducted. This analysis demonstrates that these items represent four different dimensions. If only one factor is forced, Chi^2 equals 939.91,

[30] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least four out of five items.
[31] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least five out of seven items.

reducing to 638.98 when two factors are forced, to 350.32 with three factors, and ultimately reduces to 167.47 when four factors are generated. Moreover, based on the eigenvalues, these items indeed represent four dimensions.

In order to measure *neediness,* respondents were asked to answer four questions (see table 3.1, 3th factor[32]) answerable on a scale from 1: very necessary for society to 5:

Table 3.1 Scale analyses for criteria the public uses to judge who should receive state aid

	1st factor: compli-ance	*2nd factor: control*	*3th factor: need*	*4th factor: identity*
Society does not really need old-age pension schemes	-0.03	0.06	**0.46**	0.05
Society does not really need unemployment schemes	0.12	0.33	**0.50**	0.09
Society does not really need disability schemes	0.06	0.11	**0.66**	0.04
Society does not really need social assistance schemes	0.12	0.18	**0.76**	0.07
One can personally influence being unemployed	0.03	**0.54**	0.11	0.07
One can personally influence being a single mother on social assistance	0.09	**0.42**	0.17	0.12
The unemployed could have a job if they were willing to accept all jobs	0.21	**0.62**	0.19	0.11
The longing and the willingness to work is much lower among the unemployed than among the employed	0.25	**0.58**	0.24	0.08
The unemployed make little or no effort to find a job	0.43	**0.54**	0.11	0.11
Companies should be obliged to give priority to ethnic minorities when they have a vacancy	0.08	0.14	0.01	**0.99**
Companies should receive premiums for hiring ethnic minorities	0.08	0.11	0.16	**0.59**
How often do you believe that beneficiaries are living together but do not mention that in order to obtain a higher benefit?	**0.85**	0.14	0.10	0.05
How often do you believe that beneficiaries earn money on the black market?	**0.53**	0.24	0.03	0.13
How often do you believe that elderly people are living together but do not mention that in their application in order to obtain a higher pension?	**0.68**	0.09	0.04	0.02
Eigenvalue	4.08	1.74	1.42	1.18
Chi^2	167.47			
Cronbach's alpha	0.72	0.71	0.72	0.74
N	1631			

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

[32] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least three out of four items.

not necessary for society.[33] Higher scores on this scale stand for perceptions that the beneficiaries' level of need is low. To measure the extent to which the poor have *control* over their neediness, five Likert-type items were used (see table 3.1, 2nd factor[34]). The questions as to whether respondents believe one can personally influence being unemployed/being a single mother on social assistance were answerable on a scale from 1: no influence to 5: complete influence. The remaining three items that reduce to a dimension measuring control (see table 3.1) were answerable on a scale from 1: never to 5: very often. Higher scores on this scale stand for perceptions that the poor can control their neediness. *Compliance* is measured using three items (see table 3.1, 1st factor[35]), answerable on a scale from 1: never to 5: very often. Higher scores on this scale stand for lower levels of trust. Finally, two questions (see table 3.1, 4th factor) about helping ethnic minorities measure attitudes on *identification with 'out'-groups*. Respondents could answer on a scale from 1: strong advocate to 5: strong opponent.[36] Higher scores on this scale stand for low identification with 'out'-groups.

3.4 Two Dimensions of Support for Welfare Reform

This section tests whether support for privatization and selectivity can be brought back to a dimension measuring distributive reform (*hypothesis 3.1a*), and whether support for labour market activation and discipline can be brought back to a dimension measuring recommodification (*hypothesis 3.1b*). In order to test these hypotheses, a factor model is estimated, assuming these scales tap into two dimensions.

[33] These items are not an ideal measurement for perceptions on need, but, unfortunately, questions asking respondents to what extent different beneficiaries themselves were needy were not available. The questions used probably measure perceptions on the need of beneficiaries in an indirect way as well.

[34] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least three out of five items.

[35] Scale scores were calculated as the mean score over at least two out of three items.

[36] In the presented factor analyses by generalized least squares, the loading of the first variable measuring identification with 'out'-groups – companies should be obliged to give priority to ethnic minorities when they have a vacancy – displays a loading of 0.99, which means that this variable completely determines the meaning of this component score. However, loadings of both variables yield a loading of 0.89 if I calculate a principal component analyses. In the analyses, I do not use the factor score of the factor analyses by generalized least squares, but rather I constructed a variable based on both variables. In this way, I overcome this problem.

A factor analysis clearly shows that there are two factors underlying support for welfare state reform (see table 3.2). The first factor taps into support for labour market activation and for discipline and can be labelled as tapping into support for commodifying reform – showing that an increased preference for labour market activation does go together with an increased preference to discipline welfare beneficiaries, and vice versa. The second factor taps into support for privatization and for selectivity and can be labelled as support for distributive reform – showing that an increased preference for selectivity does go together with an increasing support for privatization, and vice versa. The results demonstrate that the scales for support for welfare reform are poorly represented by four dimensions, because the eigenvalue decreases below 1 when more than two dimensions are considered.[37] Hence, the first set of hypotheses should be endorsed.[38] Support for privatization and selectivity are primarily related to a preference for distributive reform (*hypothesis 3.1a*) and support for increased labour market activation and for discipline are primarily related to a preference for recommodification (*hypothesis 3.1b*).

Table 3.2 Welfare reform: two dimensions? (Factor analyses with varimax rotation)

	Factor 1: Commodifying reform	Factor 2: Distributive Reform
Scale for **privatization** (measured by decreasing state intervention)	0.28	**0.59**
Scale for **selectivity**	-0.17	**0.81**
Scale for **promoting activation**	**0.83**	-0.04
Scale for **disciplining beneficiaries**	**0.85**	0.02
Eigenvalue	1.59	1.15
R2	0.40	0.27
N	1589	

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

[37] These results are not presented here but are available from the author upon request.
[38] This was to be expected since operationalizations followed Achterberg et al. (2010a), who also distinguished the same dimensions.

3.5 Explaining Support for Welfare Reform

The next question to be answered is whether the public supports distributive reform for different reasons than those they use to support commodifying reform. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show the results of several ordinary least squares regression models that study support for distributive versus commodifying reform. The inherent logic of the tables is the same. The first model in both tables only includes indicators for self-interest. Model 2 in both tables shows whether the effects of self-interest change when egalitarianism and authoritarianism are included. In models 3 to 6, the additional relative effects of the four criteria are estimated in turn. The final model 7 in both tables estimates the relative effects of all variables together.[39] First, the results in regard to support for distributive reform are outlined. Subsequently, the results in regard to support for commodifying reform are discussed in a similar way.

The results in table 3.3 demonstrate that income level influences support for distributive reform: the higher one's income level, the higher one's support for reform that decreases redistribution. In contrast to expectations, I do not find a significant effect for the remaining self-interest indicators, welfare dependency, education, and gender, on support for distributive reform. However, in general, the effects of the economic self-interest indicators are small; although the model does significantly explain 3 per cent of attitude formation in regard to support for distributive reforms, these attitudes remain largely unexplained (97 per cent). The effects of other economic self-interest indicators are not as expected. In regard to the expectation that the young, who are generally among those with vulnerable socioeconomic positions, would reject distributive reform to a greater extent than older people, the findings show that the opposite is true. The young support distributive reform to a greater extent than older people. Model 2 displays, as expected, that the effect of income level is cancelled out by adding economic egalitarianism to the model. Hence, people who have vulnerable socioeconomic positions due to a low income level adhere to economic egalitarianism; this in turn leads to their having lower support for distributive reform than those in

[39] I use the relative effects (betas), because I want to compare the effects of the various indicators in the models to each other. However, B-scores do not substantially differ from the beta scores presented.

stronger socioeconomic positions. *Hypothesis 3.2a* should therefore be endorsed in regard to income level.

Hypotheses 3.2c and *3.2e* are tested in models 3 to 6 in table 3.3. The results demonstrate that, as expected, those believing welfare beneficiaries are needy support distributive reform to a greater extent than those who do not believe beneficiaries are needy. Moreover, these perceptions, again as expected, can partly be interpreted as economic egalitarianism, because the relative effect of economic egalitarianism narrows, albeit slightly (from -0.23 in model 2 to -0.18 in model 3), when controlled for perceptions on neediness. However, after being controlled for perceptions on neediness this effect does not become insignificant, meaning that perceptions on neediness do not completely cancel out the effect of egalitarian values. So, people supporting economic egalitarianism believe that welfare beneficiaries are needy; this in turn leads to their having lower support for distributive reform than those supporting anti-egalitarianism. However, support for these values alone is also reason enough to reject increasing privatization and selectivity. In regard to perceptions of the extent to which beneficiaries can control their neediness, the results do not support the expectation that economic egalitarianism relates to perceptions on control over neediness, and in turn would lead them to reject distributive reform (the reduction of the beta from -0.23 in model 2 to -0.21 in model 4 is marginal). Model 5 illustrates that those who can identify themselves with 'out'-groups do not support distributive reform to a lesser extent than those who cannot. Moreover, including identification with 'out'-groups' in the model does not yield a decrease in the relative effect of economic egalitarianism; the latter remains as strong as it was in model 2. Hence, as expected, these attitudes are not related to economic egalitarian values. A comparison between model 6 and model 2, in contrast to expectations, reveals that perceptions on welfare beneficiaries' compliance has a significant effect on support for distributive reform. This is not related to an individual's support for economic egalitarian values, because the beta does not reduce in model 6 compared to model 2. In sum, support for distributive reform is dependent on economic egalitarianism (which can partly be interpreted as self-interest), perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness, and their compliance. In sum, *hypothesis 3.2c* is confirmed in regard to perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness, but not in regard to perceptions of

Table 3.3 Explaining support for distributive reform (OLS regression, method=ENTER; entries are betas)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Welfare dependency	-0.06	-0.02	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.02
Income	0.08**	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.06
Education	0.03	-0.02	-0.00	-0.02	-0.00	-0.00	0.01
Gender[a]	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03
Age	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.09*	-0.12**	-0.15**	-0.12**	-0.09*
Economic egalitarianism		-0.23**	-0.18**	-0.21**	-0.23**	-0.23**	-0.18**
Authoritarianism		0.07*	0.00	0.05	0.08*	0.04	0.01
Beneficiaries' neediness[b]			0.15**				0.14**
Beneficiaries' control[c]				0.07			0.02
Identification with 'out'-groups[b]					-0.04		-0.06
Beneficiaries' compliance[b]						0.07*	0.08*
R^2	0.03	0.08	0.10[1]	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.11
N	1611	1611	1611	1611	1611	1611	1611

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Notes: *p<0.01; **p<0.001; [1] F change between model 3 and model 7 is significant. [a] The higher pole (1) represents women. [b] Higher scores represent perceptions of lower levels of neediness, identification, compliance, respectively. [c] Higher scores represent perceptions of higher levels of control over neediness.

their control over their neediness. *Hypothesis 3.2e* is confirmed in regard to perceived identification with 'out'-groups, but not in regard to perceptions of welfare beneficiaries' compliance.

To explore this issue further, model 7 tests *hypothesis 3.3a*: people who believe welfare beneficiaries are needy are expected to support distributive reform to a lesser extent than those who do not believe that beneficiaries are needy; this is expected to be unrelated to economic interest or economic egalitarianism. First, it is worth noting that the explained variance of this model is rather low (11 per cent), meaning that factors other than those hypothesized explain the variance of support for distributive reform for the remaining 89 per cent. Nevertheless, the indicators in the models presented here do significantly affect support for distributive reform, since the F-tests are significant. Second, the results demonstrate that the premise of *hypothesis 3.3a* cannot, strictly speaking, be endorsed. Despite the significant beta of perceptions of welfare beneficiaries' neediness on support for distributive reform, the relative effects of economic egalitarianism, age, and perceptions of beneficiaries' compliance still remain significant. However, my expectation was quite accurate after all for several reasons. For one thing, perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness explain support for distributive reform as expected. Moreover, given the existing empirical evidence on welfare fraud, the significant effect of perceptions on beneficiaries' compliance is, on second thoughts, rather likely after all. According to my analyses, the justification for distributive reforms resides most strongly in protecting needy people, as Goodin (1988) argues. However, it also depends, but to a lesser extent, on perceptions about welfare beneficiaries' compliance. Those suspecting welfare fraud support distributive reform to a greater extent than those who do not. Also, age and economic egalitarianism still have an effect on distributive reform in the final model in which the effect of economic egalitarianism is relatively strong. An explanation for the unexpected effect of age has been discussed before. In regard to the effect of economic egalitarianism: although the strength of the effect decreases, support for these values still has a relatively strong effect on support for distributive reform, and this cannot be interpreted as perceptions on the level of neediness of beneficiaries. Self-interest is apparently rooted within economic egalitarianism, but economic egalitarianism is less rooted within perceptions on the

need of welfare beneficiaries. Support for these values cannot exclusively be interpreted as support for needy people. It has a significant effect on support for decreasing redistribution independently. In sum, strictly speaking, *hypothesis 3.3a* should be rejected. In addition to perceptions on the need of beneficiaries, economic egalitarianism and age also have an effect on support for distributive reform – the effects of neediness and economic egalitarianism being most influential.

The next question to address is the explanation of the support for commodifying reform. Table 3.4 shows the summarized results of ordinary least squares regression models estimating determinants of support for commodifying reform. The first model demonstrates, as expected, that people with lower income levels and/or who are welfare dependent, support recommodification to a lesser extent than those in stronger socioeconomic positions. However, this disappears or reduces significantly when economic egalitarianism is factored in as well. As expected, the influence of income level disappears after controlling for economic egalitarianism. The relative effect of welfare dependency is cut in half, but remains intact: ideological motives cannot explain completely why people who are dependent on welfare state arrangements reject commodifying reform. Apparently, an individual's direct interests from welfare dependency alone is reason enough to reject activation and increased discipline of welfare state beneficiaries. Another regression model which is not shown here, excluding the effect of economic egalitarianism and authoritarianism in reversal, demonstrates that economic egalitarianism, and not authoritarianism, is responsible for disappearing or decreasing effects of the self-interest indicators. In sum, *hypothesis 3.2b* is accepted, since those in weak economic positions (low income-level groups and welfare dependent) adhere to economic egalitarian values, and in turn support commodifying reform to a greater extent than those in strong economic positions (high income groups and not welfare dependent).

Models 3 to 6 in table 3.4 then test *hypotheses 3.2d* and *3.2f*. Both hypotheses are tested in two steps. Regarding *hypothesis 3.2d*, the results reveal, first of all, that those who consider welfare beneficiaries as needy support recommodification to a lesser extent than those who do not. Moreover, perceptions of a beneficiary's neediness are, as expected, partly rooted within economic egalitarianism, since the beta decreases,

Table 3.4 Explaining support for commodifying reform (OLS regression, method=ENTER; entries are betas)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Welfare dependency	-0.22**	-0.14**	-0.13**	-0.13**	-0.15**	-0.15**	-0.11**
Income	0.08*	0.05	0.07*	0.06*	0.05	0.06*	0.06*
Education	-0.11**	-0.06*	-0.06*	-0.02	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03
Gender[a]	-0.03	0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.00
Age	-0.02	0.05	0.03	0.06*	0.01	0.01	0.08**
Economic egalitarianism		-0.35**	-0.28**	-0.17**	-0.31**	-0.31**	-0.15**
Authoritarianism		0.39**	0.35**	0.25**	0.35**	0.32**	0.20**
Beneficiaries' neediness[b]			0.16**				0.08**
Beneficiaries' control[c]				0.45**			0.39**
Identification with 'out'-groups[b]					0.13**		0.08**
Beneficiaries' compliance[b]						0.24**	0.12**
R^2	0.07	0.34	0.35	0.46[1]	0.33	0.38	0.51
N	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Notes: *p<0.01; **p<0.001. [1] F change between model 4 and model 7 is significant. [a] The higher pole (1) represents women. [b] Higher scores represent perceptions of lower levels of neediness, identification, compliance respectively. [c] Higher scores represent perceptions of higher levels of control over neediness.

however slightly, from -0.35 in model 2 to -0.28 in model 3. Second of all, when model 4 and model 2 are compared, table 3.4 reveals that perceptions of beneficiaries' control over neediness should also partly be interpreted as economic egalitarianism, since the beta is cut in half (-0.35 in model 2 and -.17 in model 4). Therefore, *hypothesis 3.2d* is endorsed: those who believe that beneficiaries are needy and do not bear responsibility for their neediness adhere to economic egalitarianism, and in turn support recommodification to a lesser extent than those supporting anti-egalitarianism.

Models 3 and 4 also reveal several other interesting results that demonstrate that it is not economic self-interest alone that drives support for, or rejection of, recommodification. When perceptions on neediness are controlled for in model 3, the positive significant effect of income returns. Moreover, the negative effect of education on support for recommodification disappears after factoring control over neediness into model 4, while simultaneously significant effects of age and income level return. First, these results imply that the more highly and the less educated support commodifying reform to the same extent provided that welfare beneficiaries bear no personal responsibility for their neediness. Second, the results suggest in regard to the effect of age that older people support recommodification to a higher degree than the young, not as was expected because of their economic self-interest, but because of the degree to which they believe beneficiaries have control over neediness. If they believe that beneficiaries personally have control over neediness, older people support recommodification to a greater extent than the young. However, if they believe that beneficiaries do not have control over their neediness, older people and the young support commodifying reform to the same extent. Third, the returning significant effect of income both in model 3 and model 4 needs clarification. However, note that the relative effect is still small. Model 2 demonstrated that economic egalitarianism cancelled out the effect of income level, meaning that people with lower income levels reject recommodification because they adhere to an economic egalitarian ideology. However, the fact that this effect returns when either perceptions on neediness or control over neediness are factored in implies that people with higher income levels apparently also reject commodifying reform if these reform policies are targeted at needy beneficiaries who do not bear responsibility (control) for their neediness.

In regard to *hypothesis 3.2f*, the results in table 3.4 show that the extent to which people identify themselves with 'out'-groups, as well as the extent to which they consider welfare beneficiaries compliant, influence support for recommodification according to the expectations: those who do not identify themselves with 'out'-groups and who do not consider welfare beneficiaries compliant support recommodification to a greater extent than those who do. Moreover, support for these criteria, as expected, cannot be interpreted as economic egalitarianism (because of a rather modest reduction in the beta for economic egalitarianism in model 2 compared to model 5). *Hypothesis 3.2f* should therefore be endorsed.

Finally, *hypothesis 3.3b* is tested in model 7. The expectation is that four criteria influence support for commodifying reform. First, the model with the four criteria reveals a significant improvement of fit; it explains 51 per cent of the variance in perceptions on support for recommodification. Moreover, the results reveal that those who believe that beneficiaries are needy, do not bear personal responsibility for their neediness (control), are like themselves, and behave compliantly reject commodifying reform to a greater extent than those who believe that beneficiaries are not needy, are in control of their neediness, are not like themselves, and abuse welfare arrangements. *Hypothesis 3.3b* should therefore be endorsed.

However, despite this overall conclusion, the model also contains other information worth noting. First of all, the model reveals that the effect of economic egalitarianism reduces significantly when the four criteria are controlled for. Models 3 and 4 reveal that perceptions on beneficiaries' control over neediness cancel out a large part of the influence of economic egalitarianism (which can partly be interpreted as economic self-interest). However, the results also indicate that, in some cases, people in strong socioeconomic positions (more highly educated and older people) also reject commodifying reform despite their economic interest in supporting reform. This support is conditional on the extent to which they believe welfare beneficiaries are needy and not accountable for their neediness. Second of all, the control variable authoritarianism has a relatively strong positive effect on support for recommodification: those who support authoritarianism support recommodification because they want to impose moral social order and they reject deviating lifestyles – in this regard from those who do

not work and are not self-supporting. Also note that authoritarianism has about as much explanatory power as economic egalitarianism, indicating that one indeed has to control for authoritarianism if the effect of economic egalitarianism is examined. In this chapter, I do not discuss this effect any further because it is a control variable for which no effects have been hypothesized, but see Achterberg et al. (2010a; Submitted) for detailed studies on the effects of authoritarianism on welfare state reform support.

3.6 Conclusion and Discussion

The research reported in this chapter improves our understanding of support for welfare state reform, and consequently of welfare state legitimacy, in several ways. First, the results reveal that there is no single clear-cut dimension of support for welfare state reform. In the literature on welfare state transformations, retrenchment is often assumed to summarize contemporary welfare state reform (cf. Bonoli et al., 2000; Pallier, 2003; Pierson, 1994). In theory, however, as well as in the public's perceptions, two dimensions of support for welfare state reform should be distinguished: distributive reform – decreasing redistribution – and commodifying reform – increasing recommodification. Support for privatization goes together with support for increased selectivity, but support for these two types of distributive reform does not go together with support for two commodifying types of reform – increasing activation and disciplining.

Second, the ideological basis and structure of support for welfare state reform is not one dimensional either. Support for both commodifying reform and distributive reform can to some extent be explained by an individual's economic position and (often concomitant) egalitarian values. However, whereas support for distributive reforms is predominantly explained by perceptions of the level of neediness of beneficiaries, support for commodifying reforms is merely based on four moral criteria that the public uses to judge who should receive state aid. My findings do not support previous studies in which economic or class interest is the master determinant of welfare state support. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that it is not self-evident that people oppose the politics of retrenchment as soon as reforms decrease voters' material gains.

The different nature of these two kinds of reforms most likely explains why the ideological basis of support for distributive and commodifying reforms differs. Distributive reform policies strike at the roots of the original foundation of old welfare states in their golden age, because these reforms aim to decrease redistribution by decreasing former rather generous welfare state arrangements. The justification for old, generous, and rather unconditional welfare state arrangements lies in protecting needy and vulnerable people (Goodin, 1988). My findings demonstrate that the public at large supports distributive reforms, provided that those in true need still receive state aid. Therefore, the ideological basis of support for distributive policies has not changed: neediness still justifies distributive policies. In contrast, the justification for commodifying reforms, which are characterized by new welfarism, lies in reciprocal fairness. Hence, commodifying reform policies demonstrate the increasing role of reciprocity within social policy as well as within public opinion (compare Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Mead, 1986). In order to receive entitlements to some form of state aid, people increasingly need to comply with the rules, their obligations increase, and rules and obligations are strictly enforced. Whereas the ideological basis of support for distributive reform has not changed, the ideological basis of relatively new commodifying policies differs fundamentally from the old welfare state logic.

Another noteworthy difference between distributive and commodifying reforms concerns the explained variances. Whereas self-interest, (often concomitant) egalitarian values, and the four moral criteria explain a poor 11 per cent of the variance in attitudes about distributive reforms, they explain a powerful 51 per cent of the variance in attitudes about commodifying reforms. The findings give a pretty accurate picture of the ideological basis and structure of support for commodifying reforms. However, support for distributive reforms is also influenced by other, unknown factors – for example welfare state institutions themselves – to a considerable degree (I shall come back to this in chapter 7).

Another interesting finding relates to expected age effects on support for reforms. The young are generally in a vulnerable socioeconomic position, and this increases their economic interest in welfare arrangements. Surprisingly though, despite this high economic interest, the young do not reject reforms to a greater extent than

older people. In fact, the young support distributive reforms to a greater extent than older people. Moreover, the young support commodifying reform to the same extent as older people. However, if older people consider poverty as being self-inflicted, they support recommodification to a greater extent than the young. These findings are rather surprising because they contrast the premise that economic self-interest drives support for welfare reforms. An explanation for these results could be found in Inglehart's (1997) famous book *Modernization and Postmodernization*. Inglehart argues that older generations support materialist values to a greater extent than younger, postmodern generations, who support post-materialist values to a greater extent. Inglehart (1997: 131) describes this value shift between generations as a shift 'from giving top priority to physical sustenance and safety [and social order], towards heavier emphasis on belonging, self-expression, and the quality of life.' Were this true, it is likely that older people, who according to this theory support materialist values, reject decreasing income redistribution, which decreases physical sustenance, to a greater extent that the young. These materialist values could simultaneously explain why older people support commodifying reform on the condition that poverty is not self-inflicted. Older people could believe that those who receive state aid in situations where they would have been able to prevent neediness are failing to comply with social order. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to examine whether materialist and post-materialist values explain these unexpected findings. Future research should examine this premise.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates, in more detail than chapter 2 did, that people indeed could prefer welfare state reforms rather than generous and unconditional welfare arrangements. After more than two decades of welfare state transformations, public opinion and social policy apparently indeed do not deviate as much as suggested by a review of welfare state research (compare chapter 1). Hence, this research demonstrates once more that we cannot properly understand welfare state support without considering real welfare policies simultaneously. However, support for reform is examined at a rather general level. Knowledge on support for two general, ideological kinds of welfare state reforms has been increased. However, it is likely that support is also multidimensional in another way, namely in its consequences: do people make

distinctions about whom reform policies should target? The next chapter addresses the relationship between support for reform and support for various social categories.

Appendix to Chapter 3

Table A3.1 Scale analyses for support for privatization

Do you think the government should enforce a social security scheme to protect people against the financial consequences of the following things, or should the choice to be insured against these consequences be left to civilians themselves?	*1st factor*
…becoming unemployed	0.64
…becoming incapacitated to work	0.81
…becoming old	0.73
…becoming a widow/widower	0.69
…becoming sick and because of that, not able to work	0.83
Eigenvalue	2.75
R^2	0.55
Cronbach's alpha	0.79
N	1883

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A3.2 Scale analysis for attitudes about cutting old-age pensions

Old-age pensions should be lower for elderly people…:	*1st factor*
…who have an alternative income than for elderly people who do not have an alternative income	0.66
…whose partner is still working and has an income than for elderly people whose partner is not working and does not have an income	0.70
…who have children with an income than for elderly people who do not have children	0.57
…who have lots of savings than for elderly people without or with considerably less savings	0.62
…who live with one of their children than for elderly people who live on their own	0.70
… who live with a brother or sister than for elderly people who live on their own	0.72
Eigenvalue	2.63
R^2	0.44
Cronbach's alpha	0.74
N	2177

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A3.3 Scale analysis for values pertaining to selectivity

	1st factor
According to which principle should all benefits be distributed? (1: the rich get more because they contributed more, 2: rich and poor get the same amount, 3: the poor get more because they need it more)	0.86
According to which principle should state pensions be distributed? (same options as above)	0.87
Do you think that people with a sufficiently high income should 1: get as much child support as other people, 2: receive less, or 3: nothing?	0.66
Scale attitudes selectively cutting state pensions (table A3.2)	0.46
Eigenvalue	2.13
R^2	0.53
Cronbach's alpha	0.69
N	1770

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A3.4 Scale analysis for support for labour market activation

	1st factor
Social assistance beneficiaries should be required to pay society back by doing some kind of work in return for their benefits.	0.92
Long-term unemployed people who receive unemployment benefits should be required to pay society back by doing some kind of work in return for their benefits.	0.91
People who receive disability benefits should be required to pay society back by doing some kind of work in return for their benefits.	0.63
Eigenvalue	2.06
R^2	0.69
Cronbach's alpha	0.76
N	1988

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A3.5 Scale analysis for support for more discipline

	1st factor
Welfare beneficiaries nowadays have more rights than obligations	0.65
We should check more thoroughly whether welfare beneficiaries are searching for a job actively enough	0.84
Welfare beneficiaries often try to escape their duties	0.71
We should check more thoroughly whether welfare beneficiaries are registering the correct information	0.79
We should punish welfare beneficiaries who have not registered correctly	0.71
We should punish the unemployed who are not searching for a job actively enough	0.79
Eigenvalue	3.39
R^2	0.56
Cronbach's alpha	0.84
N	1744

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A3.6 Scale analysis economic egalitarianism

	1st factor
The state should make social benefits higher	0.71
There is no longer any real poverty in the Netherlands*	0.63
Large income differences are unfair because in essence everyone is equal	0.86
The state should intervene to reduce income differences	0.62
Companies should be obliged to allow their employees to share in the profits	0.63
Eigenvalue	2.69
R^2	0.54
Cronbach's alpha	0.78
N	1851

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: * item recoded

Table A3.7 Scale analysis authoritarianism

	1st factor
Young people often revolt against social situations that they find unjust: however, when they get older they ought to become resigned to reality	0.65
What we need are fewer laws and institutions and more courageous, tireless and devoted leaders whom people can trust	0.66
Because of rapid changes it is hard to distinguish good from bad	0.54
There are two sorts of people: the strong and the weak	0.66
Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked, and feebleminded people	0.73
If people would talk less and work harder, everything would be better	0.70
Because of the many opinions on good and bad, it is not clear what is what	0.71
Eigenvalue	2.59
R^2	0.43
Cronbach's alpha	0.74
N	1846

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Chapter 4

Who Deserves Help?
Preferences as to Whom Contemporary Welfare State Reform Should Target

4.1 Introduction

So far, support for welfare state reform has been examined at a rather general, ideological level. Research on welfare state legitimacy, however, demonstrates that support at a rather general, ideological level – as examined in chapter 3 – differs from support for programmes targeted at specific social categories. To give an example, in the Danish context, Ringen (1987: 56) writes: 'A majority of the respondents agree that "politicians spend the tax payers' money too freely"', but also that in most specific policy areas (except unemployment compensation) public spending is only adequate or too low. Kangas (1997) also reveals that support measured at a general level differs significantly from support at an in-depth level. Other scholars have put effort into producing rankings of levels of perceived deservingness – or legitimacy – of different social categories (Achterberg et al., 2010a: 91-104; Coughlin, 1980; Katz, 1990; Petterson, 1995; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Van Oorschot, 2006a). These deservingness or legitimacy rankings seem to be fairly solid and universal across Western welfare states. So, citizens make distinctions about the extent to which different groups of needy citizens should receive (financial) help from the state. Some social categories are supported to a greater degree than others. The next step in this search to understand welfare state legitimacy is, therefore, to examine support for various social categories.

Although chapter 3 examined why the Dutch support contemporary welfare state reform, it did not examine whether the Dutch differentiate between the social

categories that reform should target more or less intensely. However, if support for various social categories indeed differs, it is also plausible that the public at large favours the targeting of welfare state reform more intensely at some social categories than at others. As argued in chapter 3, social policy has become increasingly conditional and selective. Perhaps the public favours targeting unconditional and universal welfare arrangements at 'deserving' social categories, whereas they prefer conditional and selective welfare arrangements to be targeted at 'undeserving' social categories. Moreover, chapter 3 revealed that the public distinguishes between two types of welfare state reform: support for decreasing redistribution (distributive reform) and support for increasing recommodification (commodifying reform). Does the public consequently prefer distributive reform to be targeted at different social categories than commodifying reform? If the answer is yes, there could not be a universal deservingness ranking, because 'undeserving' social categories at which the public prefers distributive reform to be targeted would then be other 'undeserving' categories at which the public at large prefers commodifying reform to be targeted. Consequently, the public could have several motives for deciding whether a social category is considered more or less deserving.

As chapter 3 demonstrated, the public uses four criteria to decide who is considered deserving: beneficiaries' level of neediness, their control over neediness, identification with 'out'-groups, and beneficiaries' level of compliance. Therefore, it is likely that, depending on the criterion considered, perceptions of who deserves state aid diverge. The neediness of various social categories could be judged differently than perceptions on the extent to which individuals can identify themselves with social categories. Were this true, some social categories could be considered undeserving because the public could not identify themselves with them, whereas the same social category could be considered deserving on account of the belief that this category was needy. Moreover, since the Dutch public distinguishes between distributive and commodifying reform policies, it is likely that preferences about which social categories distributive reform should target are driven by a criterion other than the criterion used to decide at whom to target commodifying reform. Therefore, three questions are examined in this chapter. First, does the public at large discern various deservingness

rankings if different criteria are considered? Moreover, does the public at large relate support for different *types of welfare state reform* differently to support for *various social categories* (with different levels of perceived deservingness)? And if so, how is this relationship mediated by the criteria that the public uses to decide who should receive state aid?

In order to answer these questions, the next section elaborates on the existing literature, resulting in three testable hypotheses. The data and results are then discussed.

4.2 Deservingness, Support for Reform, and Support for Various Social Categories

Various scholars have examined welfare state legitimacy at an in-depth level of who deserves help (Achterberg et al., 2010a: 91-104; Coughlin, 1980; Katz, 1990; Petterson, 1995; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Van Oorschot, 2006a). These studies all conclude that one ranking summarizes the public's preferences about who deserves help. Moreover, they argue that rankings of the perceived deservingness or legitimacy of various social categories are fairly comparable across different countries. These rankings demonstrate that single mothers, the elderly, and sick people are ranked as most deserving, whereas the unemployed and immigrants are usually ranked least deserving (cf. Appelbaum, 2002; Coughlin, 1980; Van Oorschot, 2006a). Studies like these have, of course, been valuable as they play a crucial role in transmuting the general, ideological level of welfare state legitimacy to an in-depth level of who deserves help. However, as different criteria explain welfare state support, these rankings may vary depending on the criterion that underlies these deservingness perceptions. Studies examining the possibility of multiple rankings are scarce, but a few studies do indicate that the public indeed discerns several deservingness rankings. Gilens (1999), for example, demonstrated that the American public is, in some cases, supportive towards financial support for blacks, who are usually on the bottom of deservingness rankings. This support is conditional on perceptions about the extent to which immigrants have control over their needy situation. Moreover, country-specific welfare institutions could affect

deservingness perceptions. In the Netherlands, it is, for example, likely that the disabled receive relatively low support if a ranking is based on perceptions of beneficiaries' compliance. Until the 1980s, Dutch disability benefits were generous and rather unconditional. This caused many employees and employers to misuse this scheme to provide a more generous unemployment benefit (Arts, 2004; Van Oorschot, 2006a). Consequently, public support for aid for the disabled might be relatively low in the Netherlands. In order to clarify the criteria on which deservingness rankings are based – as is the case in existing rankings – the possibility of multiple rankings should be examined. In a ranking based on perceptions of identification[40] with social categories, for example, most people probably can identify themselves with the elderly, since most people are acquainted with elderly people in their personal environment and will be, or at least hope to be, old themselves one day. Moreover, for similar reasons, identification with families with children is probably high as well. It is far less evident that people will be able to identify themselves with the unemployed and people on social assistance. These social categories deviate more or less from dominant norms of being self-supporting and of having a job to provide for an income (Houtman, 1994; Mead, 1992), and this probably results in low identification with them. Regarding the sick and disabled, most people can probably identify themselves with those groups, because of the arbitrary nature of this social risk. In a ranking based on perceptions about the extent to which different social categories have control over their neediness, however, the public at large probably considers that having children is an individual's own choice. That is, people with children will probably be considered least deserving in this respect, whereas being old or a widow or an orphan will probably be perceived as neediness without any personal responsibility (control). Consequently, the elderly as well as widows and orphans are probably conceived as highly deserving in a ranking based on their control over neediness. Moreover, as argued, in a ranking based on perceptions about the extent to which social categories are compliant, the Dutch disabled might be judged as relatively undeserving. Finally, in a ranking based on perceptions on the level

[40] In order to be able to produce a ranking, identification with 'out'-groups is in this chapter conceived as identification with different social categories. The conception of the previous chapter, identification with ethnic minorities, contains only one social category, which makes it impossible to produce a ranking.

of neediness of a social category, isolated from the other criteria, it is likely that people living on social assistance are ranked as relatively deserving, because they are obviously in need of state aid. Hence, to understand welfare state legitimacy in depth we need more thorough investigation of rankings representing the legitimacy of different social categories based on the different criteria that the public uses to judge who should receive state aid. The first hypothesis is that the public distinguishes four different deservingness rankings, each based either on perceptions of beneficiaries' neediness, their control over neediness, their compliance, and the level of identification with social categories *(hypothesis 4.1).*

The next question that needs to be addressed is whether the public prefers distributive reform – decreasing redistribution – to be targeted at different beneficiaries than those targeted by commodifying reform – increasing recommodification. Several scholars demonstrate that there is a link between deservingness and support for welfare state reform by examining whether politicians can win public support for unpopular welfare state reform by framing issues in terms of the deservingness of welfare state recipients (Cox, 2001; Green-Pedersen and van Kersbergen, 2002; Levy, 1999; Torfing, 2004). Such studies provide in-depth insights into preferences as regards targeting reform towards 'undeserving' rather than 'deserving' beneficiaries, but in an indirect manner. Slothuus (2007), for example, has shown with a vignette experiment that citizens' support for retrenchment depends on the perceived deservingness of social security recipients. Individuals exposed to a frame presenting social categories as behaving 'undeservingly' appear to be relatively supportive of welfare state retrenchment, whereas individuals exposed to a frame presenting social categories as behaving 'deservingly' are less supportive of retrenchment. Or in other words, according to these results, the public prefers retrenchment measures to be targeted at social categories who are considered to behave in an undeserving way, but not at recipients perceived as behaving in a deserving manner.

However, these scholars mistakenly purport welfare state reform as well as deservingness to be one-dimensional variables. Slothuus (2007), for example, assumes that retrenchment captures all welfare state reform and equates retrenchment with increasing selectivity. Chapter 3 demonstrated categorically that this premise is false,

because in the actual policies as well as within the public's perceptions, two roots of welfare state reform should be distinguished. First of all, the umbrella concept of retrenchment summarizes four reform policies visible within actual welfare policies: *privatization of social risks, increasing selectivity, activation in order to enhance labour market participation, and increasingly discipline welfare beneficiaries* (Gilbert, 2004; Van der Veen, 2009; chapter 3 of this study). Second of all, these four policy transformations reduce to two ideological reform dimensions. Increasing selectivity captures only one type of reform that decreases redistribution (distributive reform), and it does not measure increasing recommodification (commodifying reform) at all. Moreover, the deservingness of different social categories should be placed in a ranking instead of classifying recipients as either deserving or undeserving. In these studies, deservingness perceptions are equated with perceptions of social categories' willingness to find a job (which refers to the criterion control over neediness). Yet, not one, but four criteria are expected to explain which reform should be targeted at which social categories according to the public. Therefore, the relationship between targeting and support for welfare state reform should be examined more thoroughly.

We expect four criteria – neediness, control over neediness, beneficiaries' compliance, and identification with social categories – to explain why the public would prefer distributive and commodifying reform to be targeted at some beneficiaries to a high degree, but not at others. The criterion that explains the recipients to which distributive reform should be targeted to a high degree is expected to differ from the criterion that explains the recipients to which commodifying reform should be targeted. In order to examine this relationship more accurately, two hypotheses are tested. The first concerns expectations in regard to distributive reform, the second in regard to commodifying reform. In regard to distributive reform, the justification for these reform policies lies in the level of neediness of social categories (Goodin, 1988: 27-50; compare also chapter 3 of this thesis). Therefore, I expect that the relationship between support for decreasing redistribution and support for social categories will be mediated by the public's perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness, rather than their control over neediness, compliance or the perceived level of identification with social categories. For those social categories perceived to be needy, thus for those categories that the public

at large considers deserving, people advocating distributive reform (decreasing redistribution) will presumably tend to support this 'deserving' social category just as much as those emphasizing less distributive reform. However, in relation to social categories who are considered to be undeserving because the public at large believes their level of neediness is low, the public's ideological view of distributive reform policies is expected to come into play – those emphasizing less redistribution will tend to support these 'undeserving' social categories to a greater extent than those emphasizing more redistribution. This brings me to the following expectation: preferences about the degree to which distributive reform should be targeted at various social categories are mediated by perceptions on a beneficiary's level of neediness *(hypothesis 4.2).*

In regard to commodifying reform, three criteria could in theory mediate the relationship between support for commodifying reform and support for various social categories. As discussed in chapter 3, the justification for recommodification lies in reciprocal justice, whereby those who do not obey the rules are punished and those who do obey the rules are rewarded (Achterberg et al., 2010a; Mau, 2004; Ullrich, 2002). Moreover, these commodifying reform policies force welfare beneficiaries to adjust their conduct in conformity with the dominant work ethos prevailing in society (Mead, 1992), meaning among other things that beneficiaries are compliant, try to be self-supporting, and bear no responsibility for their neediness. As various scholars have demonstrated that actual policy designs do not usually diverge much from the public's preferences[41] (Mau, 2003; Sharp, 1999; see also chapter 5 of this study), the criteria control over neediness, compliance, and identification with social categories are expected to mediate the relationship between support for commodifying reform and support for social categories. On a practical level, however, that would be impossible if rankings based on different criteria indeed vary as assumed in *hypothesis 4.1*. Since there is no specific theoretical reason to pick one criterion, I form a rather general hypothesis to explore which of these criteria mediates the relationship between support for commodifying reform and support for various social categories. In general, I expect that for those social categories considered deserving (in this case referring to the

[41] Although the direction of causality remains unclear in these studies (compare chapter 6 of this book; see also Raven, 2011; Raven et al., 2011)

perceived level of identification, compliance, or personal responsibility for neediness), people advocating recommodification will tend to support these 'deserving' social categories just as much as those emphasizing less recommodification. However, when social categories who are thought to be undeserving are considered (here: not compliant, deviant, or in control of their neediness), the public's ideological views on commodifying reform come into play – those emphasizing more recommodification will tend to support 'undeserving' social categories to a lesser extent than those emphasizing less recommodification. This brings us to the following expectation: preferences about the degree to which commodifying reform should be targeted at various social categories are mediated by the criteria control over neediness, compliance, or identification (*hypothesis 4.3*).

4.3 Data and measures

In order to test the hypotheses proposed above, I use the 2006 survey *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security) introduced in chapter 3.

4.3.1 Four Deservingness Rankings

Because of limitations within the data, it is, unfortunately, not possible to construct four rankings using equal social categories. For each ranking, as many social categories as possible are included. Therefore, depending on the data available, rankings vary somewhat in regard to which social category is included.

The ranking based on perceptions of social categories' neediness can be constructed using five social categories. This ranking is constructed using the sum of two questions. First, respondents were asked whether they believe that society really needs (respectively, old-age pensions, disability benefits, social assistance, unemployment benefits), on a 5-point scale ranging from 1: not necessary for society to 5: very necessary for society. Unfortunately, this question was not available with regard to the sick. Therefore the same score as for the disabled is used for the sick. In order to construct a fair-minded scale, average perceptions of benefit generosity have been considered as well. The following question is used: To what extent is it in general

possible to manage on: (respectively, old-age pensions, sick pay, disability benefits, social assistance, unemployment benefits), on the following 5-point scale: 1: very difficult, 2: difficult, 3: possible, 4: easy, 5: very easy (recoded in a way that higher scores stand for the perception that it is more difficult to live on the benefit). In this way, errors as a result of faulty perceptions of a beneficiary's level of neediness are prevented. To give an example, citizens who believe that old-age pensions are not generous could consequently believe that the level of neediness of the elderly is relatively high. Table A4.1 (in the appendix to this chapter) presents the rankings of these two questions separately. The higher the score, the higher respondents judge a social category's level of deservingness based on neediness.

To measure a second ranking based on the criterion, level of identification, average scores of respondents' perceptions about ever receiving each benefit are used. This measures the level of identification with different social categories who receive state aid. It is possible to construct this ranking for seven social categories. Respondents were asked: How do you perceive your chance of (ever) using (respectively, old-age pensions, child allowances, benefits for widows and orphans, sick pay, disability benefits, unemployment benefits, or social assistance) yourself (answerable on a 7-point scale from 1: very low chance to 7: receiving the benefit now). The higher the average score, the more people can identify themselves with those social categories, and the higher a social category is ranked on a deservingness scale based on this criterion.

A third ranking is based on perceptions of the level of compliance of various social categories. It is possible to construct this ranking for seven social categories, using the following questions: How often do you believe social categories abuse (respectively, old-age pensions, child allowances, scholarships, sick pay, disability benefits, unemployment benefits, or social assistance benefits)? Respondents could answer 1: hardly, 2: sometimes, or 3: often. These answers are recoded in a way that higher scores represent perceptions of a higher level of compliance of beneficiaries (higher levels of deservingness).

Finally, it is possible to construct a ranking based on perceptions of the extent to which social categories personally can control their neediness in regard to seven social categories. Therefore, I use the following questions: to what extent do you believe

people personally influence (respectively, being a widow/orphan, being old, having children, being disabled, being sick, being unemployment, or living on social assistance). Respondents could answer on a 5-point scale from 1: no influence at all to 5: total influence. These answers are recoded so that higher scores stand for perceptions of low control over neediness (higher levels of deservingness).

Subsequently, support for different social security schemes is measured by asking respondents whether they would prefer social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, sick pay, family allowances, benefits for widows and orphans, and benefits for disabled to increase or decrease (answerable on a 5-point scale from 1: decrease strongly to 5: increase strongly). Higher scores stand for more support for a social category. This is an indirect way to measure support for various social categories, because I measure support through support for higher or lower benefits for a social category. Direct questions that measure the extent of support for various social categories were, unfortunately, not available.

4.3.2 Method

In order to examine preferences about which social categories distributive reform and commodifying reform should target more or less intensely and which criterion mediates these preferences, I analyse the data in two steps. First, the relationship between support for reforms (either distributive or commodifying) and support for social categories is analysed using several ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses. These OLS regression analyses demonstrate whether those supporting reform (either distributive or commodifying) support some social categories to a lesser extent than those not supporting reform. Then, the rankings reveal whether perceptions of a social category's level of neediness, control over neediness, compliance, or identification mediates the relationship between support for reform (again either distributive or commodifying) and support for different social categories. If the public favours targeting reform policies at 'undeserving' social categories but not at 'deserving' categories, one would expect those supporting reform (distributive or commodifying) to support 'undeserving' social categories (not needy, not compliant, deviant, or in control of their neediness) to a lesser extent than those not supporting reform. Conversely, in relation

to 'deserving' social categories, those supporting reform are not expected to support 'deserving' social categories to a lesser extent than those not supporting reform. Therefore, the regression analyses should demonstrate a relatively strong relationship between support for reform and support for social categories considered undeserving and a relatively weak relationship in regard to support for social categories considered deserving. In other words, I expect to find an increase in the strength of relationships (betas) between support for reform and support for social categories in line with a deservingness ranking based on either perceptions of neediness, control over neediness, compliance, or identification. Or in other words, I expect a weak relationship (beta) in regard to 'deserving' social categories and a strong relationship (beta) in regard to 'undeserving' social categories. Moreover, I control in every regression analysis for income level, age, welfare dependency, gender, and educational level. See section 3.3.2 for the measurement of these variables. Section 3.3.1 outlines the operationalization of support for distributive and commodifying reform policies.

4.4 Multidimensional Consequences of Support for Welfare Reform?

This section explores whether the public classifies various social categories in four different deservingness rankings. Thereafter, the mediating effect of these deservingness rankings for the relationship between support for reform and support for various social categories is examined by testing *hypotheses 4.2* and *4.3*.

4.4.1 Four Different Deservingness Rankings?

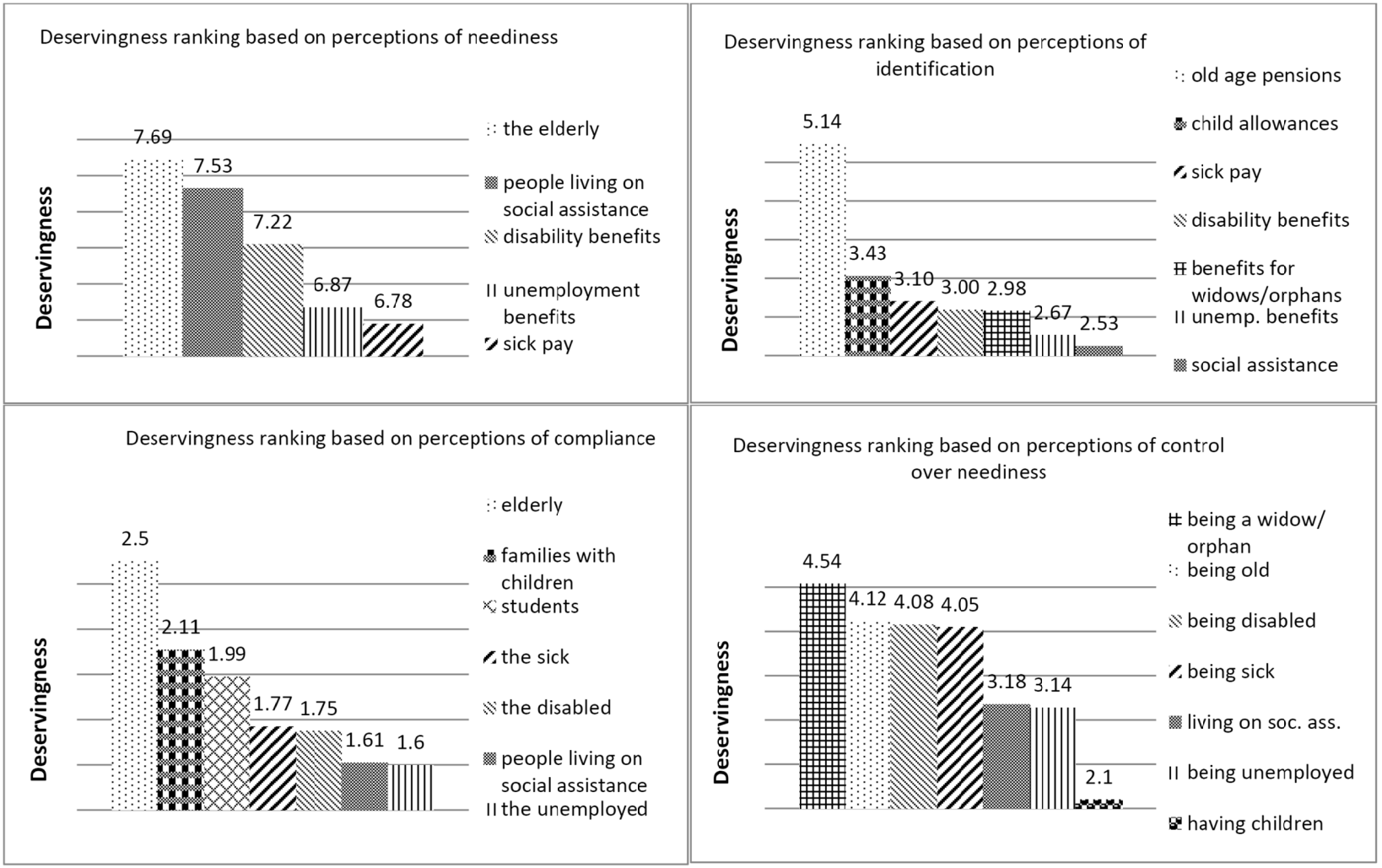
At a first glance, figure 4.1 illustrates, as expected, that, depending on the criterion considered, the public classifies deservingness of various social categories in four rankings. First, the deservingness ranking based on neediness demonstrates that the public at large considers the elderly as most needy, followed by social assistance claimants and the disabled. The unemployed and the sick are considered least needy. This neediness ranking deviates from the universal ranking presented within the

deservingness literature, because social assistance claimants are perceived as relatively deserving in respect of their neediness, whereas the sick are considered least deserving. That the sick are at the bottom in this ranking needs clarification. Viewed objectively, sick people are evidently in need of financial help if they are not able to work and provide for their own income. However, in the Netherlands, sick pay is an employer responsibility and the income level is quite generous. The public's perceptions on the level of neediness of the sick are presumably biased because of that.

Figure 4.1 also demonstrates a ranking of perceived identification with various social categories, their control over neediness, and their compliance. Regarding identification, citizens identify themselves mostly with the elderly, followed by, respectively, families with children, sick people, the disabled, and widows and orphans. Identification with the unemployed and people on social assistance is lowest; these groups are, as expected, considered most deviant. This ranking does correspond more or less to the ranking that, within the deservingness literature, is assumed to be universal. However, the ranking based on perceptions of control over neediness demonstrates that families with children are placed at the bottom of this ranking (meaning they are considered least deserving in terms of control), whereas widows and orphans are at the top of this ranking (hence, considered most deserving in terms of control). The public apparently believes that having children is something people can influence to a large extent, whereas one has none, or little, influence on being a widow or an orphan. In regard to the other social categories, this control ranking corresponds more or less to the identification ranking. The fourth ranking based on perceptions of the level of compliance of various social categories reveals that the Dutch believe the unemployed and people living on social assistance are least compliant, and are therefore considered least deserving, followed by the disabled, people on sick pay, students, and families with children. The elderly are considered most compliant.

Although it may be true that the rankings in figure 4.1 differ – at least they apparently do – the question is whether these differences are significant. Unfortunately, technically it is impossible to test whether the means of the various questions differ significantly from each other, because a mean score depends heavily on the complexity

Figure 4.1 Deservingness rankings of social categories based on perceived level of neediness, identification, control over neediness, and compliance



Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

of a question (compare Tiemeijer, 2006; Tiemeijer, 2008). Nonetheless, it is possible to give an indication of whether differences are significant by presenting error bars of the mean scores (see figures A4.1 to A4.4 in the appendix to this chapter). Roughly speaking, differences are likely to be significant if the error bars of the various means do not overlap. A cautious interpretation of the ranking, based on perceived levels of neediness, reveals that differences between the mean score of considerations on neediness of various social categories could very well be significant, except for the difference between the unemployed and sick people. Differences also seem to be significant in regard to the extent to which respondents are able to identify themselves with various social categories. However, in this respect, the mean scores of identification with sick people, the disabled, and widows and orphans probably do not differ significantly from each other. In regard to the ranking based on levels of control over neediness and compliance, it is far less clear whether the public indeed position one social category in a different place than another social category in terms of control over neediness or compliance. Within the ranking based on control over neediness, the mean scores of the extent to which the Dutch consider age, disability, or sickness something one can personally influence do not appear to differ. Also, the mean scores of the perceived level of control over being unemployed or living on social assistance probably are more equal than distinct. In regard to the ranking based on compliance, the public does not discern between compliance of people on sick pay and those receiving disability benefits. Moreover, the public also considers the compliance or non-compliance of people on social assistance and unemployment benefits as being similar.

To conclude, optically the results show four different deservingness rankings based on different criteria. However, the error bars demonstrate that the rankings based on neediness and identification are the most solid. Hence, *hypothesis 4.1* is endorsed in regard to rankings based on the level of identification with, and neediness of, various social categories. The public at large does not clearly distinguish the deservingness of social categories on the basis of perceptions of people's compliance or control over neediness. Therefore, I use two rankings in the remainder of this chapter: a neediness ranking and an identification ranking.

4.4.2 Preferences as to Whom Contemporary Welfare Reform Should Target

This section explores whether the Dutch prefer specific welfare reforms to be merely targeted at specific social categories. I analyse this using ordinary least squares regression analyses. As argued in section 4.3.2, I expect an increase in the betas of support for reform (distributive and commodifying, respectively) along the deservingness rankings (based on perceived neediness and identification, respectively).[42]

Figure 4.2 illustrates the betas in regard to the relationship between support for distributive reform and support for five social categories ranked from the elderly to sick people in terms of need[43] (see also table A4.2 in the appendix to this chapter, in which the betas of the control variables are also shown). The results reveal, in contrast to expectations, that all betas are minimal, and in most cases parameters are insignificant. Placing these betas in a neediness ranking does not reveal an increase in the strengths of the betas. People who support distributive reform do not support people who are perceived as having a relatively low level of neediness to a lesser extent than those who do not support distributive reform. Therefore, *hypothesis 4.2* should be rejected: the degree to which distributive reform should target various social categories is not mediated by perceptions on a beneficiary's level of neediness. In fact, since the betas are minimal in regard to all relationships between support for distributive reform and support for different social categories, the Dutch apparently do not differentiate at all in relation to whom distributive reforms should target to a greater (or lesser) extent. Hence, no criterion at all mediates preferences about whom distributive reform should target.

[42] In this section, no attention is given to the control variables of the ordinary least squares regression analyses. However, the results are comparable to the results discussed in chapter 3.

[43] Testing the effects of support for distributive reform and commodifying reform in one regression model yields similar results. The factor analyses in chapter 3 demonstrated that these two types of reform are unrelated to each other. Therefore, the results when both reforms are analysed in the same regression models indeed should reveal similar results as when separate regressions are conducted. I, however, choose to analyse the effects of reform separately, because the mediating criteria differ, as well as the number of social categories included.

Figure 4.2 Relationship between support for distributive reforms and support for social categories

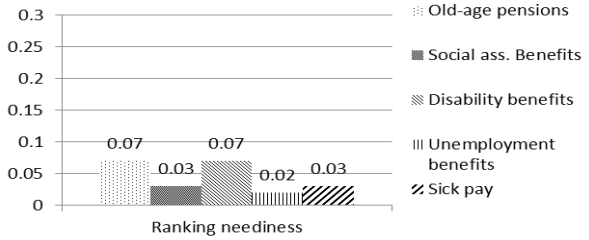
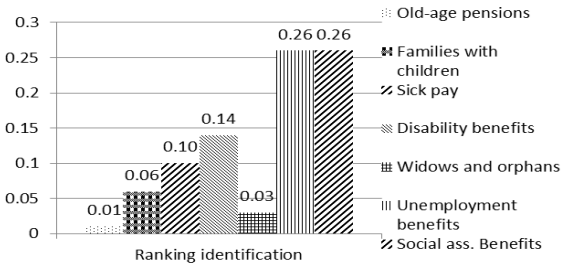


Figure 4.3 Relationship between support for recommodification and support for social categories



Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: The betas in these figures are negative, but presented as being positive, because that optically demonstrates the trend more clearly. Tables A4.2 and A4.3 (in the appendix to this chapter) show the relative effects of each variable included in the model.

The results in figure 4.3 demonstrate a clear upwards trend in the strength of the betas. Those supporting recommodification are less supportive towards the unemployed and people living on social assistance than those not supporting commodifying reform. Moreover, as figure 4.3 demonstrates, the strength of the betas indeed increases along the identification ranking. Moreover, except for the difference between unemployment and social assistance benefits, all differences between betas are significant.[44] Hence, people who support commodifying reform support deviant social categories to a lesser extent than they support social categories perceived to be like themselves. Identification with the elderly is highest, and support for commodifying reform does not relate to support for the elderly. People who do support commodifying reform do not differ much in their support for the 'deserving' elderly from people who do not support commodifying reform. As figure 4.3 clearly illustrates, this difference between people who do and people who do not support commodifying reform increases along the identification ranking and is strongest in regard to support for the unemployed and people living on social assistance. People who do support commodifying reform are least supportive towards the unemployed and social assistance claimants, whereas people who do not support commodifying reform are supportive towards the unemployed and

[44] Calculated by first converting the betas into z values. Thereafter, I used the following formula to calculate the observed value of z: Zobs = (Z1 – Z2)/√((1/(N1-3) + (1/N2-3)). If -1.96<Zobs<1.96, the correlation (or betas) coefficients are not significant, otherwise they are (Pallant, 2007). An exception is the difference in regard to unemployment benefits and social assistance benefits.

social assistance claimants. The only exception concerns the effect of support for commodifying reform on support for widows and orphans. Support for widows and orphans is apparently not related to a person's ideological view on commodifying reform. In sum, a person's ideological views on commodifying reform have a negative effect on support for 'deviant', 'undeserving' social categories and not so much support for 'deserving' social categories with which a person identifies him/herself. Hence, *hypothesis 4.3* should be endorsed: preferences about the extent to which commodifying reform should target various social categories are mediated by the criterion identification.

4.5 Conclusion and Discussion

The research reported in this chapter disentangles notions of deservingness in two ways. First of all, there is no universal deservingness ranking, as is the consensus within the deservingness literature (cf. Coughlin, 1980; Katz, 1990; Petterson, 1995; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Van Oorschot, 2006a). In relation to the different reasons why people could be perceived as deserving, the public differentiates between the extent to which they consider various social categories deserving in terms of need and identification. Hence, rankings differ depending on the frame used to present the social categories for whom respondents judge deservingness.

Second, preferences about whom welfare state reforms should target are mediated by the reasons why people are perceived as deserving. The findings demonstrate that people who support recommodification prefer these reforms particularly to target 'undeserving' social categories with whom they cannot identify themselves and not 'deserving' social categories with whom they can identify themselves. These results suggest that increasing heterogeneity in societies indeed may result in decreasing welfare state legitimacy (compare discussion in chapter 1). These results underscore the fact that people indeed tend to feel more solidarity towards those with whom they identify themselves (De Swaan, 1994; Halvorsen, 2007; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007) because they tend to support reform measures that in a way reprimand deviant welfare claimants, although these measures preferably should not

apply to claimants with whom they do identify themselves. However, the Dutch do not differentiate between whom distributive reforms should target to a great (or little) extent. It is interesting to compare these results with those in chapter 3. Chapter 3 demonstrated that people in some circumstances could support distributive reforms in general. On the basis of the findings in this chapter, however, this support seems to fade away when people actually visualize the consequences of such reforms for real welfare claimants. When they imagine real welfare recipients at whom these distributive reforms will be targeted, there is no relationship between support for distributive reforms and support for different social categories whatsoever.

It should be noted that the direction of causality could also be the other way around: people who consider social categories undeserving could therefore support welfare state reform policies. Ordinary least squares regression analyses calculate relationships and not causality per se.[45] Nonetheless, in regard to the central question of this chapter, the direction of causality does not matter. If people support welfare state reform because they consider some social categories as undeserving, those people probably also prefer reform to be heavily targeted at these 'undeserving' social categories, but not at social categories considered deserving.

If the findings in this chapter are compared to the findings in chapter 3, it is remarkable that the public does not significantly deviate in the extent to which they consider people deserving on the basis of their level of control over neediness or their level of compliance. In the literature in which these moral criteria are distinguished, it is usually assumed that these criteria relate to public expectations of how people should behave in exchange for deserving state aid. However, the findings in this chapter suggest that particularly the criteria need and identification concern expectations of how people should behave as well as which social categories deserve conditional state aid. This underscores the importance of considering levels of support in depth. In-depth consideration of levels of support for specific social categories entails reconsidering the meaning of moral criteria that explain welfare support at a rather general level as

[45] OLS regression analyses can be interpreted as testing the effects of several indicators on an outcome variable, if it is not reasonable to believe that the outcome variable could also influence predictors (as is the case in chapter 3). However, the independent variable is not unambiguous in relation to support for welfare state reform and support for several social categories.

examined in chapter 3 (compare Kangas, 1997; Ringen, 1987). It is possible that the two remaining criteria, control over neediness and compliance, merely refer to institutional norms rather than to criteria used to judge people's behaviour. Perhaps the public expect their institutions to ascertain that the poverty of welfare claimants is not self-inflicted and that claimants behave compliantly. The next chapter addresses institutional norms in more detail.

To conclude, these findings once more point out that the Dutch do not support generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements for everyone and that welfare state support cannot sufficiently be understood without considering welfare state reforms simultaneously. The Dutch could support commodifying welfare state reform policies to a great extent provided that these reform policies are targeted at 'undeserving' social categories. The next chapter disentangles support for welfare state reform at an even deeper in-depth level by including the macro level of real social policy designs. Chapter 5 diverges from the rather general distributive and commodifying reform dimensions. It examines the legitimacy of welfare state reforms at the level of the institutional ideology of reform measures within specific social security schemes.

Appendix to Chapter 4

Table A4.1 Perceptions on the level of neediness of various social categories (means)

Ranking neediness	Necessity of social security for …	Possibility to live on benefits for …
1 The elderly	4.33	3.36
2 People living on social assistance	3.72	3.81
3 The disabled	3.91	3.31
4 The unemployed	3.68	3.19
5 The sick	3.91	2.87

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

Table A4.2 Effect of support for distributive reform on various social categories (5 OLS regressions, entries are betas)

	Old-age pensions	Social ass. Benefits	Disability benefits	Unemployment benefits	Sick pay
Support distributive reform	-0.07*	-0.05	-0.07*	-0.03	-0.03
Welfare dependency	0.05	0.02	0.08	-0.00	-0.02
Income	-0.08*	0.00	0.00	-0.05	-0.01
Education	-0.06*	-0.03	-0.02	-0.06	-0.07*
Gender	0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.01
Age	0.05	0.01	-0.05	0.09*	0.07
Economic egalitarianism	0.23**	0.36**	0.33**	0.34**	0.24**
Authoritarianism	0.15**	-0.20**	-0.02	-0.15**	0.06
R^2	0.15	0.19	0.14	0.16	0.08
N	1740	1722	1721	1713	1720

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: * p<0.01; **p<0.001.

Table A4.3 Influences of support for welfare reforms on benefit levels for different recipients (7 OLS regressions, entries are betas)

	Old-age pensions	Child allowances	Sick pay	Disability benefits	Benefits for widows/orph	Unemploy-ment benefits	Social ass. benefits
Support distributive ref.	-0.01	-0.06	-0.10**	-0.14**	-0.03	-0.26**	-0.26**
Welfare dependency	0.03	0.05	-0.04	0.06	-0.02	-0.01	-0.00
Income	-0.09*	-0.05	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.07*	0.01
Education	-0.06	0.02	-0.06	-0.02	-0.09*	-0.05	-0.03
Gender	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.01
Age	0.09*	-0.18**	0.09*	-0.04	0.18**	0.10**	0.03
Economic egalitarianism	0.24**	0.10**	0.18**	0.29**	0.19**	0.25**	0.27**
Authoritarianism	0.14**	0.01	-0.08*	0.02	0.16**	-0.05	-0.11**
R^2	0.14	0.05	0.08	0.15	0.14	0.20	0.23
N	1681	1677	1661	1664	1616	1655	1668

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: * p<0.01; **p<0.001.

Figure A4.1 **Error bar of the means used to investigate rankings based on the perceived neediness of various social categories**

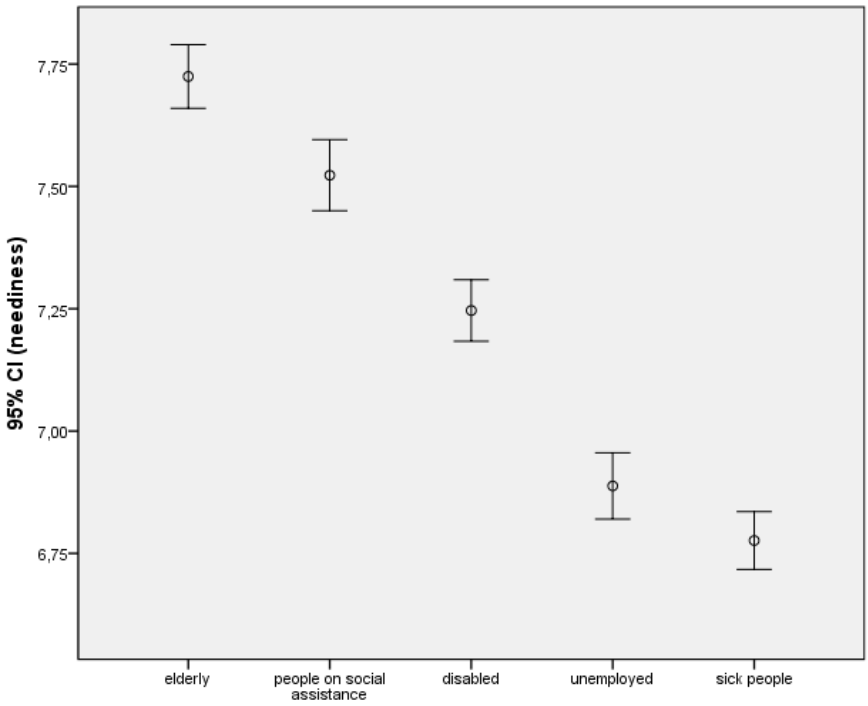


Figure A4.2 **Error bar of the means used to investigate rankings based on the perceived identification with various social categories**

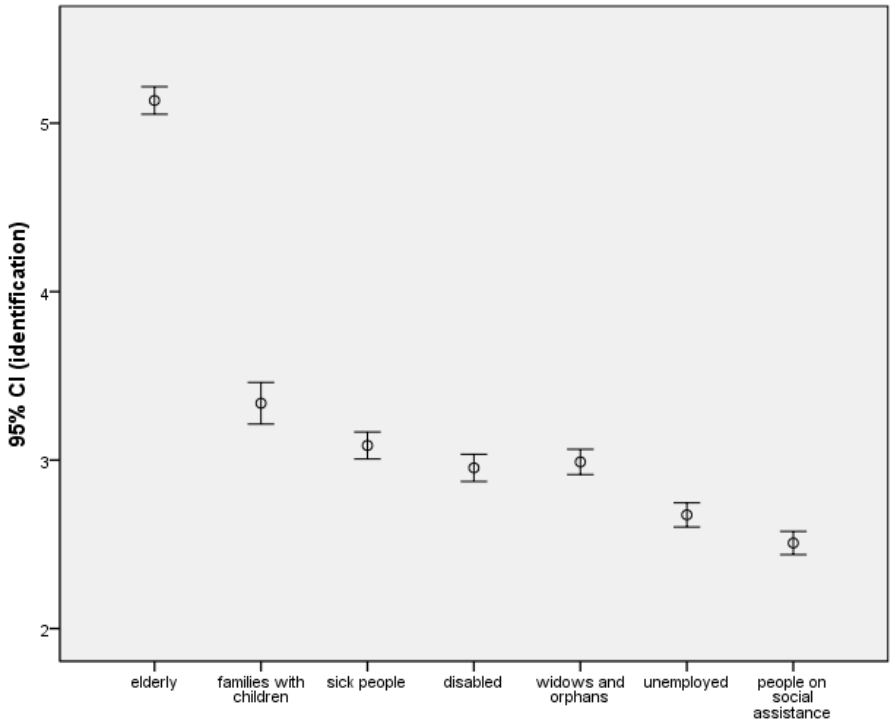


Figure A4.3 **Error bar of the means used to investigate rankings based on the perceived level of control over neediness of various social categories**

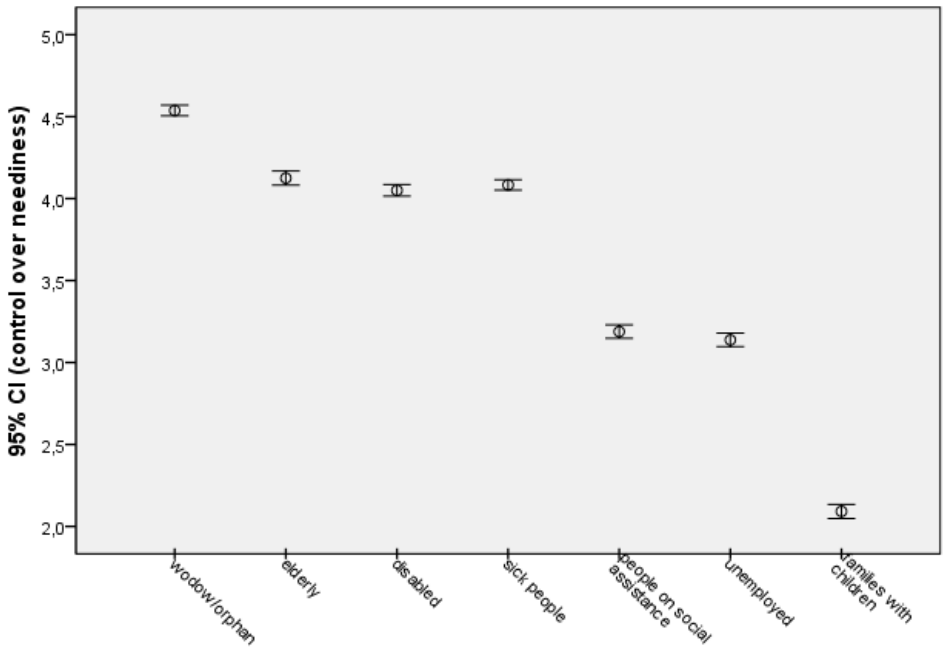
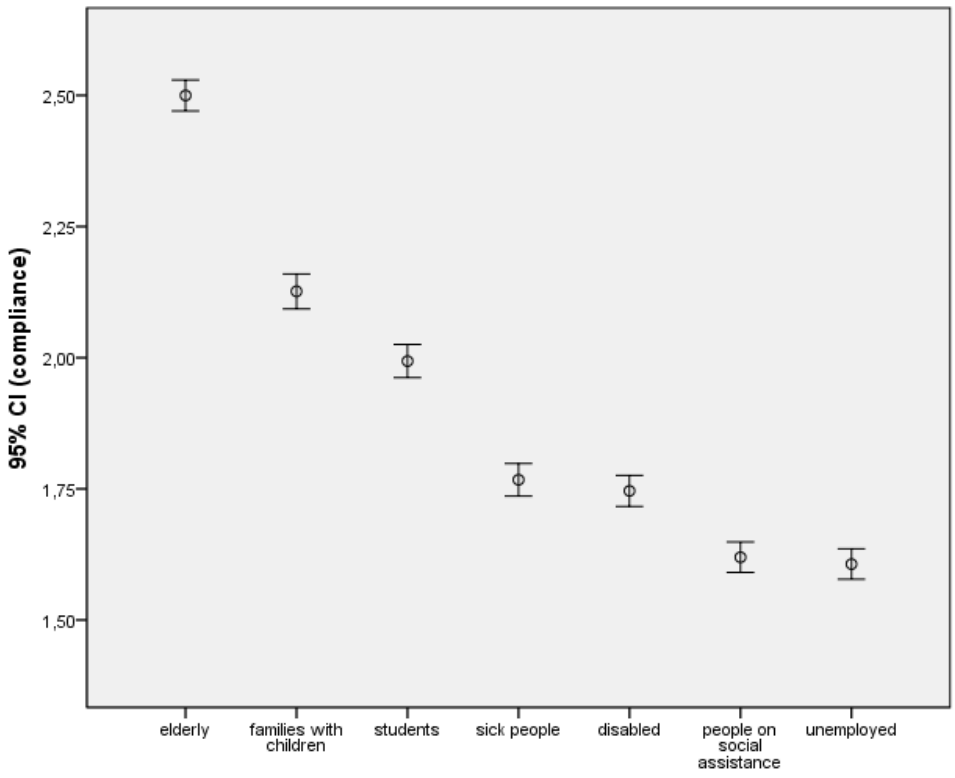


Figure A4.4 **Error bar of the means used to investigate rankings based on the perceived compliance of various social categories**



Chapter 5

The Macro–Micro Link
The Moral Economy of Four Dutch Social Security Institutions

5.1 Introduction

For the next step in this reconnoitring expedition to understand support for welfare state reform, I diverge from the rather general way in which support for reform has been examined so far. This chapter addresses the legitimacy of reform within four social security designs – the social assistance, unemployment, old-age pension, and disability schemes – targeted at four different social categories – people living on social assistance, the unemployed, the elderly, and the disabled.[46] As illustrated in chapter 4, the public at large differentiates between whom welfare state reform policies should target. These preferences relate to rather general, ideological reform policies. However, the extent to which reform policies are incorporated within different social security schemes targeted at different social categories probably also differs substantially between schemes. Transformations within the social assistance scheme may differ from those characterizing developments in the old-age pension, unemployment, or disability schemes (compare Mau, 2003). Therefore, this chapter examines whether transformations within different social security schemes indeed differ, and whether the public at large approves these specific transformations for each scheme. Hence, the

[46] Within welfare provision, social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, and disability benefits are the schemes with which the public at large is most acquainted, since for example in 1995 82 per cent of Dutch people benefited from one of these schemes, or had a relative or friend who did (Van Oorschot, 2002); this increased to 87 per cent in 2006 (own calculations using data described in section 5.4, not presented, but available upon request). Therefore, I investigate these four schemes.

central question is whether reform policies within four social security designs targeted at four different social categories correspond to the public's preferences for transformations within these designs. In this manner, I depart from micro-level explanations of legitimacy and include the macro level of social policy designs.

In order to do this properly, we need an explanatory mechanism that links the macro and the micro levels. However, many theories on welfare state legitimacy lack an explanatory mechanism that links the macro level – the analysis of the organization of social policy – and the micro level – popular opinions on welfare states. '[P]revious studies have not been able to find the mechanisms that link the macro- and micro-structure' (Albrekt Larsen, 2006: 2). In various studies, scholars claim to investigate this link through ideology; but although these scholars presume to link the two levels on the basis of ideology, they in fact tend to study ideology on just one level (but see Albrekt Larsen 2006 and Mau 2003 for exceptions), assuming this level affects the other. Or in other words, these scholars examine either the ideology of individuals at the micro level, assuming macro-level institutions adapt to this ideology (e.g.Brooks and Manza, 2006; Korpi and Palme, 1998), or the institutional ideology embedded within social policy institutions at the macro level, assuming that individuals adapt their preferences to these institutions (cf. Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1997). What we need to do, however, to link the macro and the micro level is connect the institutional ideology of welfare institutions and individual preferences on institutional ideology. By linking the institutional ideology of both levels, this chapter improves existing attempts to investigate macro–micro links.

In order to disentangle essential dimensions of institutional ideology at both levels, this chapter is based on the notion that there is a moral economy. The historian Thompson (1971) introduced the concept of moral economy in his famous article *The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century.* Thompson's objective was to explain the resistance of citizens towards particular economic transactions. He found that it was seldom starvation – self-interest – that was responsible for the food riots in the eighteenth century in England. Rather, it was the idea that governing powers had broken a contract that was based on a deep-rooted societal consensus about rights to which all citizens were entitled. The political scientist Scott (1976) used the concept in

a similar manner in his study *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia.* 'The welfare capitalist countries of today are profoundly influenced by a modern form of moral economy, centering on notions of the justice and legitimacy of social structures' (Svallfors, 2006: 2). This chapter examines the relationship between the macro level of social policy and the micro level of individual preferences by analysing the Dutch moral economy of four social security institutions.[47]

According to the moral economy theory, welfare state legitimacy depends on the level of congruity between norms incorporated within policy designs and the public's preferences about which norms should be embedded (compare Mau, 2003; Sachweh et al., 2007). Therefore, using this theory also enables examination of the provisional conclusion of chapter 2 more accurately. The increase in support for increasing welfare entitlements in general and social security entitlements in particular proved to be a result of policy developments, instead of an indication of increasing support for generous welfare entitlements. In this chapter, I test whether support for social security entitlements increases if there is a high correspondence between the institutional ideology embedded within social security schemes and the desires and expectations of citizens. If there is a high correspondence, it is all the more likely that the increase in support for increasing generous welfare entitlements is a result of policy developments. In other words, the increase in support is then reasonably a result of public support for contemporary welfare state reforms. Therefore, the following central question is examined in this chapter: do developments in norms incorporated in designs of the social assistance, unemployment, old-age pension, and disability schemes correspond to developments in public opinion? I expect that, if reform within the moral structure of

[47] Within political and social science, no definition of institutions has yet become institutionalized. Rather, definitions of institutions abound. I follow Pierson's (1993: 608) definition that applies to welfare state institutions, which partly builds on North's (1990: 3) definition of an institution in general. North defines institutions as 'the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, … the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction.' Pierson continues that '[t]his definition would seem to encompass public policies as well as what we conventionally recognize as institutions, since policies clearly do establish rules and create constraints that shape behaviour.' In fact, long before institutionalism and new institutionalism came up in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively, Lowi (1964: 644) had already devised a similar definition in the early 1960s. Lowi argues that 'policies, once established, act as institutions: they create a framework in which certain resources, rules, and norms are imposed upon citizens.' In this chapter, these definitions are referred to when I use the term institutions.

social security schemes corresponds highly to the desires and expectations of citizens, support for these arrangements will increase.

Notions of a moral economy are discussed in section 5.2. This section explores dimensions of institutional ideology on which social contracts between the governed and the authorities are based. Section 5.3 outlines the norms embedded in the four social security schemes examined in this chapter, switching thereafter from the moral structure of policy to the public's moral preferences. After the data and measurement are outlined in section 5.4, section 5.5 outlines individual support for dimensions of institutional ideology. Finally, after the level of Dutch support for entitlements to four social security schemes are demonstrated in 5.6, section 5.7 presents the correspondence between developments in norms embedded within schemes and developments in public preferences.

5.2 Notions of Moral Economy

Welfare capitalist countries are characterized by a modern form of moral economy. Notions of this modern form of moral economy refer to moral codes (rights and obligations) prevailing in a society. Both citizens and governing powers should comply with these moral codes (Kohli, 1987; Mau, 2003; Scott, 1976; Svallfors, 2006; Thompson, 1971). These moral codes are also incorporated within social security institutions. Therefore, social security institutions accomplish transactions between the state and recipients, which are not purely economic by nature. These transactions also rely on social norms and moral presumptions. Social norms and moral presumptions vary between countries, because general notions on welfare entitlements targeted at specific social categories differ in each society. Esping-Anderson's (1990; 1999) classification of welfare state regimes is, for example, based on such cultural differences between countries. Another example is provided by Mau, who demonstrates differences in the moral economy of German welfare state institutions and the moral economy of those in Britain. Moreover, they also differ between various welfare arrangements. To give an example in regard to two social security schemes: old-age pension schemes in both Britain and Germany appear to be much more generous and unconditional than social

assistance schemes (Mau, 2003: 110-126/147-165). '[T]he inducement to interact and to accept discomfort and burdens [for example paying taxes] is based on general conceptions of fairness, [...] and notions of deserving. Claims and counterclaims on resources need to be normatively validated and the question of repayments is closely tied to the cognitive, behavioural and motivational stances of the interactants' (Mau, 2003: 35). Which specific moral codes are incorporated within specific policy designs define the justice principles on which specific social contracts between authorities and the governed are grounded.

Three dimensions, responsibility, legality, and reciprocity, summarize conceptions of fairness of moral economy, and consequently could point out differences in moral economies of various welfare institutions (compare Mau, 2003; Scott, 1976; Svallfors, 2006).[48] Scott (1976: 3) argued that in pre-capitalist societies '[p]atterns of reciprocity [and] forced generosity [...] helped to even out the inevitable troughs in a family's resources which might otherwise have thrown them below subsistence.' Scott termed these patterns as a *subsistence ethic*. Authorities are accepted only if they honour this ethic. In modern capitalist countries, these patterns of reciprocity and forced generosity are arranged and secured by the welfare state. Depending on the accuracy of implementations, citizens accept or reject state institutions. If patterns of reciprocity and forced generosity in state institutions do not correspond to the public's preferences, the legitimacy of these institutions decreases or disappears and would, according to Thompson (1971) and Scott (1976), ultimately result in riots of mass publics. In a modern form of moral economy, it could be argued that, in many modern welfare states, rebellion of mass publics is institutionalized and organized, for example initiated by trade unions.

In regard to the first dimension of the moral economy, responsibility, citizens expect the state to protect residents against social risks, if people bear no responsibility

[48] Despite the fact that the conceptions of responsibility and legality appear rather similar to those in chapter 3 and 4, the dimensions of the moral economy do not refer to deservingness. Moral economy concerns trade-offs between state and residents which are based on institutional ideology, whereas deservingness refers to judgements of individuals. Therefore, in the current chapter, the extent to which responsibility and legality are embedded within social security schemes as well as preferences for responsibility and legality within policy are considered rather than individual preferences themselves.

for poverty. In Thompson's study of the moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century, the crowd expected the state to protect citizens against high unemployment rates and high prices. In regard to the form of moral economy relating to welfare state institutions, responsibility refers to the behaviour of people who receive state aid rather than to such major processes that are clearly beyond individuals' personal responsibility.

The second dimension of the moral economy is the legality of welfare state institutions. In a modern form of moral economy in welfare capitalist countries legality refers to the level to which welfare state institutions implement and execute welfare arrangements accurately, meaning that they enforce compliant behaviour by welfare beneficiaries and prevent welfare fraud. A lack of legality will result in low welfare state support. Legality is partly a derivative of responsibility, meaning that people expect recipients to behave in accordance with the obligations and regulations defined within social security acts.

The third dimension defining a moral economy is reciprocity. The notion of reciprocity is based on the recognition of mutual dependency and mutual moral obligations. In modern capitalist moral economies, these norms prevail in different forms in regard to the nature of welfare arrangements and social risks, which welfare institutions aim to reduce. Welfare state arrangements, and particularly social security arrangements, procure reciprocal transactions between people. That is why the notion of reciprocity is incorporated particularly strongly in the heart of social security designs.

In regard to social security institutions, two dimensions of reciprocity are crucial in characterizing the moral economy of social security institutions: obligating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity (compare Mau, 2004).[49] Obligating reciprocity refers to

[49] These concepts are borrowed from Mau (2004), who developed a taxonomy of reciprocal norms. Mau concentrates on the nature of social security institutions and the social risks these institutions aim to reduce. Mau distinguishes four different norms of reciprocity, which vary in both scope – comprehensiveness – and nature – the level of conditionality. He connects these different notions to different social policy designs (Mau, 2004: 65). For this chapter, balanced and obligating reciprocity are used, which represent a rather strong level of conditionality, and different levels of generosity. I do not incorporate generalized reciprocity – a high degree of solidarity and is closest to altruism with some vagueness about what reciprocations are expected – and risk reciprocity – a guaranteed minimum income protection for all citizens and low conditionality – for several reasons. First, Mau's rather narrow version of moral economy focuses solely on social security institutions, whereas the original conception of moral economy

reciprocity in which returns are needs-based and conditional. Within this type, reciprocal exchanges are based on the level to which one takes responsibility and tries to be self-supporting. The difference between obligating reciprocity and responsibility is that the latter concerns one's former behaviour (input), whereas the former concerns one's future behaviour (output). A selective and residual model of social policy is based on these principles of obligating reciprocity (Mau, 2004: 65). Balanced reciprocity refers to welfare returns equivalent to one's status or former contributions. This type of reciprocity basically entails ideas of 'what comes around goes around.' Insurance-based social security schemes are based on this type of reciprocity (Mau, 2004: 65).

In conclusion, four dimensions, responsibility, legality, obligating reciprocity, and balanced reciprocity, define a moral economy of social security institutions. In the remainder of this chapter these dimensions are used to analyse the moral economy of four Dutch social security institutions. The next section outlines how these dimensions are transformed and incorporated within these institutions.

5.3 Developments in Dutch Social Security Schemes between 1995 and 2006

This section outlines the (transformations of) dimensions of moral economy that characterize four Dutch social security schemes. The analytical framework developed in section 5.2 is used to typify these arrangements by outlining developments within the four social security schemes in terms of the extent to which responsibility, legality,

includes general norms on legality and responsibility prevailing in a society as well. As chapter 3 demonstrated, these norms explain individual attitudes on welfare state reform. Therefore, using responsibility and legality is preferable to using norms of generalized and risk reciprocity. Second, generalized reciprocity as well as risk reciprocity actually do not concern real economic transactions, and are therefore less relevant, because the moral codes defining moral economy are embedded in economic transactions (compare Scott, 1976; Svallfors, 2006; Thompson, 1971). Moreover, excluding generalized and risk reciprocity entails excluding reciprocal norms representing social security institutions with a low level of conditionality. However, low conditionality is also covered by including responsibility and legality. Schemes in which norms forcing legality and/or norms demanding lack of responsibility for neediness are not incorporated could be interpreted as schemes including generalized (in the case of comprehensive benefit-income levels) and risk reciprocity (in the case of residual benefit-income levels).

obligating reciprocity, and balanced reciprocity are effectuated through the different schemes. Responsibility and legality are translated into, respectively, the degree to which dependence on a scheme is aimed to be avoided and the amount of abuse that is aimed to be avoided. The operationalization of these two variables within the description of developments of the schemes is as follows: dependence prevention is mainly visible through increasing obligations; abuse prevention is visible through intensification of rules and stricter administrative control. Balanced and obligating reciprocity are operationalized by, respectively, the level to which benefit-income levels depend on status and former contributions and the level to which benefit-income levels are needs-based and conditional.

Defining norms within social policy is obviously subject to interpretation. However, I am not interested in embedded norms as such. Rather, the subject of this chapter is the exploration of developments in these embedded norms across time. Therefore, subjectivity in defining these norms is not a serious complication in the analysis of transformations in embedded norms within the four Dutch social security schemes.

5.3.1 Social Assistance Scheme (ABW/WWB)

Within Dutch social security, only the social assistance scheme makes allowance for someone's level of neediness. It is a so-called means-tested benefit. The income level of the benefit decreases rapidly the more the applicant possesses and if his or her partner's income is above a certain level. Recipients of social assistance have the following obligations: to provide truthful and complete information about their financial situation, to actively look for paid employment, and to accept every job offered. If they do not comply with these obligations, their benefits will be curtailed. Furthermore, entitlements to social assistance depend on personal circumstances within a household. Consequently, only in very exceptional circumstances do citizens younger than 21 receive entitlements to social assistance. The preliminary Dutch social assistance act (ABW) was modified (into the WWB) in 2004, mainly involving increased emphasis on reintegrating recipients into the labour market. In this new act, exemptions for single mothers and older unemployed persons to search actively for a job were withdrawn.

Across time, conditionality increased, because obligations within social assistance have increased and entitlements have decreased. Because of these developments, *obligating* reciprocity within this scheme has increased. Originally, the income level of this benefit was relatively low and conditionality was limited or was badly maintained. Across time, beneficiaries' willingness to contribute to society in return for their benefit has been a strong precondition for receiving the full benefit.

Protecting needy people by preventing them from having to live on an income that is below the poverty line is the most important objective of the social assistance act. The definition of this poverty line is subject to change. In the Netherlands, the definition has changed for single individuals and for lone parents. Before 1996, one person households, single parents, and couples were entitled to a social assistance benefit of, respectively, 70 per cent, 90 per cent, and 100 per cent of the minimum wage and after 1996 to, respectively, 50 per cent, 70 per cent, and 100 per cent. When entitlements are being assessed, notions of *responsibility* and *legality* play a central role. In principle, entitlements to social assistance do not decrease for recipients who are personally responsible for their neediness, but temporary sanctions can be imposed (and benefits additional to the basic scheme can be withheld). These measures aim at preventing dependence on this scheme and consequently increase responsibility. Moreover, through intensification of these rules and stricter administrative control, the social assistance act increasingly enforces desired behaviour as long as a person is receiving social assistance. Therefore, *legality* has increased as well.

In conclusion, the Dutch social assistance scheme is strongly based on norms of obligating reciprocity, responsibility, and legality. Between 1995 and 2006, these dimensions were intensified. Table 5.1 summarizes these changes.

5.3.2 Unemployment Scheme (WW)

Several norms of reciprocity are incorporated in the Dutch unemployment act. This benefit is mainly characterized by *balanced* reciprocity, which is strongly embedded from of old. Two elements reflect these embedded norms. First, and rather obviously, entitlements to unemployment benefits apply only to those who had a paid job before they became unemployed. Second, those recipients who have paid a higher

unemployment premium (as a result of a longer employment history) have earned higher or longer lasting entitlements to this benefit. The fact that the young (who have generally contributed less) have difficulty in complying with the rules of entitlement to a wage-related unemployment benefit is a result of these incorporated norms of balanced reciprocity.

The Dutch unemployment scheme has changed several times since its introduction in 1952. In 1987, the unemployment act was replaced by a new unemployment act, in order to ally the unemployment scheme with the upcoming phenomenon of part-time jobs since the 1980s (Teulings, Van der Veen, and Trommel, 1997). Benefit eligibility before 1987 was dependent upon a minimum standard of days of employment. This minimum standard became less severe within this new unemployment act. Moreover, entitlements increased for those unemployed who had worked for many years before becoming unemployed. In 2006, the maximum duration of the benefit was reduced from five year to three year and two months. To counterbalance this reduction, the unemployed receive 75 per cent of their former wage during the first two months of their unemployment, reducing to 70 per cent thereafter. When entitlements to unemployment benefits end, one is entitled to social assistance.

These developments have increased the embedded norms of *balanced* reciprocity somewhat across time, because entitlements have become increasingly conditional on an employee's employment history. Also, these series of reforms have gradually introduced norms of *obligating* reciprocity, first and foremost as a result of introducing obligations to actively search for a job from 1987 onwards. A later round of reform in 2006 increased the obligatory character of activation policy even more. The unemployed have to fulfil the following obligations: an unemployed person has no entitlement to unemployment benefits if he/she is personally to blame for their unemployment or in cases of voluntary redundancy (*responsibility*). Alongside these requirements, the unemployed are obliged to register themselves as unemployed within a certain time period, and they should be available for work. Similar to the social assistance scheme, the unemployment act gradually incorporated stricter rules aimed at preventing dependence on the benefit.

In conclusion: the Dutch unemployment scheme is founded on norms of balanced and obligating reciprocity, and connected to these norms the scheme contains fairly strict rules to prevent dependence on (responsibility) and abuse of (legality) this benefit. Across time, responsibility, obligating reciprocity, and balanced reciprocity have become increasingly embedded.

5.3.3 Old-age Pension Scheme (AOW)

The Dutch old-age pension scheme is organized under a so-called multi-pillar system (Bonoli, 2003). Since 1957, the state has been responsible for the first pillar: a minimum basic income (AOW) to prevent poverty among the elderly. The second and the third pillar involve work-related and voluntary additional pensions. In this study, only the first pillar is relevant, because the state is only responsible for the first.

Since their introduction in 1957, Dutch old-age pensions have been relatively universal, because all persons aged over 65 years have unconditional[50] entitlement to this scheme. To receive a basic state pension, no reciprocal obligations are expected, and neither are there embedded rules aiming to prevent dependence on this scheme (actually, in this case, the opposite is true, since persons over 65 years old are expected to be dependent on it). Nonetheless, the risk of moral hazard has become somewhat restricted, since the possibility of transferring one's old-age pension to one's partner has become limited. Therefore, intensification of the rules to prevent abuse has increased somewhat across time. Moreover, it is a flat-rate scheme, and balanced reciprocity is therefore not embedded. Furthermore, the system demands high intergenerational solidarity, because 'today's' (younger) employees have to pay old-age pensions for 'today's' elderly. The willingness to pay for today's pensioners is based on a moral conception that the elderly should be provided with a reasonable living standard in exchange for their contribution to society during their lifetime (Mau, 2003: 147). This social contract also involves the material interest of those who pay for contemporary pensions in that they secure their own future pensions in an implicit manner, because 'today's' employees may expect to receive an old-age pension themselves when they

[50] With the exception that one should have lived a certain number of years in the Netherlands.

become old, but these expectations are based on the maintenance of the existing social contract. The younger generation, however, may feel somewhat insecure about whether they indeed will receive state pensions in the future, because of the current debate on the costs of ageing societies. Nevertheless, the Dutch pension scheme has not substantially changed since its origin in 1957. The only significant change occurred in the 1980s, when it deviated from the originally male-breadwinner-based model. Entitlements to state pensions were individualized: partners are now entitled to 50 per cent of the full pension on reaching the age of 65 (which used to be 100 per cent for men). Moreover, married and unmarried couples have equal entitlements since the 1980s. Also, old-age pensions decrease if the partner of a pensioner is younger than 65 years and still in paid employment.

To conclude: the Dutch old-age pension scheme is a universal scheme securing a minimum income for all citizens more than 65 years old. Embedded norms did not change substantially between 1995 and 2006. One exception refers to a slightly increased emphasis on *legality*, because of the somewhat reduced transferability of old-age pensions to partners.

5.3.4 Disability Insurance Scheme (WAO/WIA)

In the Netherlands, two kinds of disability insurance exist. One is provided by employers and one is a state responsibility. Short-term sickness (ZW) insurance was privatized in 1997 and since then provided by employers (WULBZ). A collective short-term disability insurance still exist for restricted groups (this exception applies for example to pregnant women), but in most cases employers are responsible for this insurance during the first two years of an employee's illness. After two years, there is collective long-term disability insurance. In this chapter, I investigate long-term disability insurance because the state is responsible for this insurance.

Dutch long-term disability benefits (WAO) were introduced in 1967. The original disability scheme was generous (wage replacement of 80 per cent) and relatively unconditional. The Dutch disability scheme does not differentiate between labour risks and social risks. Everyone has access to the disability scheme, regardless of the cause of their disability. The Dutch disability scheme is an insurance-based scheme, and

consequently norms of *balanced* reciprocity play a role in determining a recipient's benefit-income level (which relates to earlier wages). The generosity of the early Dutch disability scheme was illustrated by the fact that, if as a result of disability a person was not able to re-enter the labour market, entitlement to an income-related disability benefit was granted until the recipient received an old-age pension (Teulings et al., 1997). Because of this generosity, employees obviously preferred a disability benefit to an unemployment benefit, because employees could then exit the labour market with relatively advantageous conditions (Becker, 2000; Van Oorschot, 2006b). As a consequence, misuse, or abuse, of this scheme was rather high.

From the 1980s onwards, reforms aiming at preventing misuse (or abuse) of the disability benefit were brought into force. The wage replacement rate decreased to 70 per cent, and the partially disabled were no longer entitled to receive full benefits as they had been before this reform in order to compensate their decreased chances of employment. Also, eligibility became more stringent, the duration of entitlement decreased, and the benefit-income level became age dependent. Despite policy reforms, still one million people (out of an adult population of seven million) were in receipt of a disability benefit at the end of the 1980s. It was for this reason that Prime Minister Lubbers called his country sick, and more drastic reforms were to be undertaken. In the following years, the maximum duration of eligibility to disability benefits was limited, and disability was redefined (in the face of massive opposition). Also, measures to incentivize employers to hire disabled employees (for example in exchange for a bonus) were enacted. The effects were only visible after the introduction of the so-called Gatekeeper Act (*Wet Verbetering Poortwachter*) in 2002, when disability figures among the unemployed finally started to decline in a structural manner (compare figure 1.2 in chapter 1). The essence of this act is that employers and employees are required to provide evidence of their efforts to find a suitable new job for employees with health problems in order to prevent claims to disability benefits. Also, the requirement to accept suitable jobs was broadened to a requirement to accept all common jobs.

Despite the substantial decline of WAO claimant inflow, the disability act was transformed again into the more rigid WIA in 2006. In this new act, there was a shift from emphasizing limits imposed by disability to emphasizing opportunities still open for

Table 5.1 Trends in developments of the normative structure of social security schemes between 1995 and 2006

	Social assistance scheme	Unemployment scheme	Old-age pension scheme	Disability scheme
	1995 - 2006	1995 - 2006	1995 - 2006	1995 - 2006
Responsibility (preventing dependency)	++	+	0	+
Legality (preventing abuse)	+	0	+	++
Obligating reciprocity	++	+	0	++
Balanced reciprocity	0	+	0	+

Note: -- = strong decrease - = decrease 0= no change, + = increase, ++ = strong increase

disabled people. In the WIA, recipients are required to search actively for a new job which they can undertake despite their health problems. The WIA scheme compensates 70 per cent of the difference between the old and the new (often lower) wage. Additionally, an important reform is that claimants of the disability benefit only receive entitlements if they become disabled for at least 35 per cent of their former working time. What is more, state disability benefits for the self-employed (AAW) no longer exist since these latest reform policies. Concluding, many changes in the disability scheme that took place from the 1990s onwards were aimed at encouraging *responsibility* and *legality* and norms of *obligating reciprocity*.

Table 5.1 presents an overview of developments of the normative structures of the four social security arrangements between 1995 and 2006. The four schemes considered in this chapter differ substantially. The social assistance scheme, which is strongly founded on notions of obligating reciprocity, and the unemployment scheme, which is strongly founded on balanced reciprocity, are ideal typical schemes. The character of the old-age pension scheme as well as the disability scheme is somewhat more hybrid. The Dutch old-age pension scheme is on the one hand a scheme that provides old-age pensions to every Dutch citizen. On the other hand, this scheme is only the first pillar; it provides equal benefits to everyone (variation in income levels becomes visible after the second and third pillar). The Dutch disability scheme is on the one hand a normal social insurance, hence based on balanced reciprocity. On the other

hand, mainly as a reaction to defining this risk too widely, norms of obligating reciprocity are nowadays increasingly incorporated in this scheme.

In sum, the aforementioned developments reveal that Dutch social security arrangements have in general become more conditional and less generous. Furthermore, preventing benefit dependence and benefit abuse has become more strongly emphasized across time. Also, stimulating welfare beneficiaries to re-enter the labour market has become central in all schemes – excluding the old-age pension scheme. Due to stricter influx requirements and a decrease in the maximum duration for which one is entitled to receive the benefit, the number of recipients has decreased predominantly in regard to unemployment benefits and disability benefits.

5.4 Data and Measures

Two identical, representative Dutch surveys, carried out in 1995 and in 2006, are used to test the hypotheses. The 2006 survey *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security) has already been introduced in chapter 3. The 1995 *TISSER Solidarity Study* (Tilburg University) contains many identical questions. Therefore, I use these surveys to investigate shifting preferences on the moral economy dimensions. Both surveys are slightly over-representative of older people, higher income groups, and higher educational groups, in comparison to official statistical data from Statistics Netherlands (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*: Central Statistics Office); this is corrected by using a weighting factor in both samples.[51]

5.4.1 Moral Economy Dimensions

In order to measure perceptions of preferred incorporation of responsibility within social security designs, I use the following question: to what extent do you believe that people can personally influence being a single mother on social assistance, being

[51] Not weighting, though, does not yield any substantially different results than those reported here.

unemployed, being old, or being disabled.[52] Respondents could answer on a 5-point scale from 1: no influence at all to 5: total influence.

In regard to the legality dimension, the Dutch were asked for their belief on the extent to which social security beneficiaries abuse social security instead of obeying rules. How often do you believe social categories abuse social assistance, unemployment benefits, old age pensions, or disability benefits?[53] Respondents could answer 1: hardly, 2: sometimes, or 3: often. The categories 'sometimes' and 'often' are joined together in order to distinguish between people who consider legality high and those who do not.

To measure obligating reciprocity, respondents were asked whether they would prefer to decrease entitlements to social assistance, unemployment, and disability benefits, respectively, if a beneficiary does not actively search for a job.[54] Respondents could answer 1: yes or 2: no.

To measure balanced reciprocity, the following questions were used: 1) Do you support higher social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, respectively, if a person's former income was higher than for those whose former income was lower? 2) Do you support higher social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, disability benefits, respectively, for people who paid more taxes/premiums in the past than for those who paid fewer taxes/premiums in the past? 3) Do you support higher social assistance benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, disability benefits, respectively, for people who worked more years in the past than for people who worked fewer years in the past? In regard to old-age pensions, the first question is not applicable, because one's former income is covered through the second and third pillar of the Dutch pension scheme. Therefore, in regard to old-age

[52] However, these questions are not ideal ones for measuring responsibility. I would have preferred to have used preferences on the extent to which rules aimed at preventing dependence (responsibility) should be incorporated in the social assistance scheme, unemployment scheme, old-age pension scheme and disability scheme. These are not available however. Therefore, I operationalized preferences on responsibility in a similar way as the ranking on compliance presented in chapter 4. These questions, however, capture the public's preferences on the preferred level of preventing dependence (responsibility) of different schemes in an indirect manner as well.

[53] This operationalization is comparable to the measurement of the ranking on compliance in chapter 4.

[54] Obligating reciprocity measured by the obligation to find a job obviously does not apply to the elderly who receive an old-age pension.

pensions, respondents were asked whether old-age pensions should be higher if an elderly person had a paid job in the past than if he/she did not. In regard to these questions, respondents could answer 1: yes or 2: no.

5.4.2 Method

Preferences on responsibility, legality, obligating reciprocity, and balanced reciprocity within the four social security schemes are measured for both 1995 and 2006. Tables A5.1 to A5.7 in the appendix to this chapter present the extent (in percentages) to which the Dutch supported these dimensions in both 1995 and 2006. In general, a shift in preferences of at least 5 per cent is assigned a plus (+) or a minus (–) (depending on the direction of the shift) in relation to responsibility, legality or obligating reciprocity. A shift of less than 5 per cent is interpreted as no change in preferences. In regard to preferences for balanced reciprocity within a scheme, I consider mean differences, because I measured these preferences using several items. If this mean difference shifts at least 5 per cent, transformations are assigned a plus (+) or a minus (–) (depending on the direction of the shift), otherwise they are assigned a 0, indicating a preference for no change.

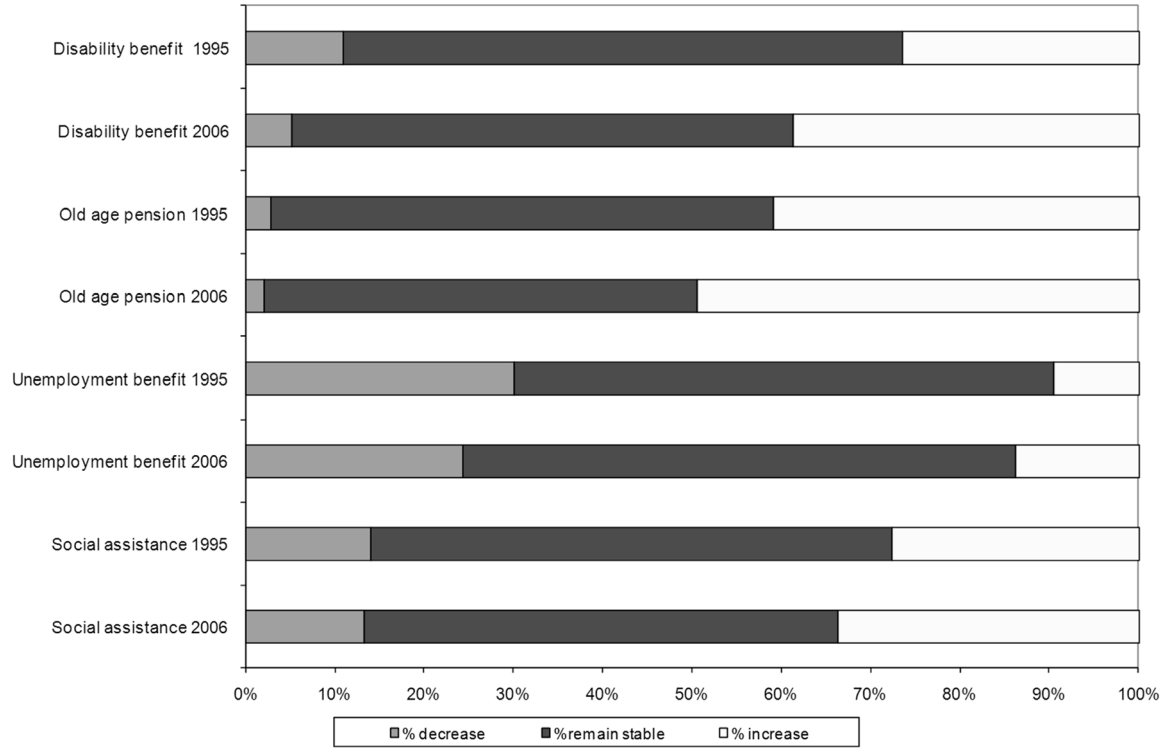
5.5 Public Support for Social Security Entitlements

Before turning to investigate the congruence between norms incorporated in schemes and the public's preferences, I illustrate Dutch support for the four social security entitlements in 1995 and 2006. The expectation examined in the current chapter – built on the findings in chapter 2 and operationalizations of support for generous welfare state arrangements used in previous studies[55] – is: if reform within the moral structure

[55] Previous studies operationalize stable, high support for generous welfare arrangements by presenting percentages of preferences to stable or increasing benefit income levels or state spending on benefits (cf. Becker, 2005; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Van Oorschot, 2002; compare discussion in chapter 1). The presumption that preferences to keep benefit-income levels (or state expenditure on benefits) stable measure support for generous welfare state arrangements is problematic. As welfare state arrangements have changed significantly across time, the meaning

of social security schemes corresponds to the desires and expectations of citizens to a high degree, support for these arrangements increases. An overview of the distribution of preferences for higher or lower entitlements to social assistance, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, and disability benefits is presented in figure 5.1. The respondents were asked for each scheme whether they would prefer stable, increasing, or decreasing entitlements to each scheme.

Figure 5.1 Public opinion on entitlements to four social security schemes (1995/2006)



Source: *TISSER Solidarity Study*, Tilburg University 1995; *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

of preferences to keep benefit-income levels stable has probably changed accordingly. Therefore, these preferences probably indicate support for welfare state reforms rather than support for generous benefits. Preferences to increase benefit income levels (or state spending on benefits) approach support for generous welfare arrangements more closely. Since this study aims to explain whether stable, high welfare state support indeed indicates support for generous welfare arrangements (as assumed in previous studies), this chapter considers support for increasing benefit-income levels rather than support for stable benefit-income levels. Moreover, chapter 2 demonstrated that it is rather likely that *increasing* support for generous welfare arrangements in fact signifies support for welfare state reforms in the Netherlands. Therefore, chapter 5 explores whether support for these arrangements *increases* if the moral structure of social security schemes corresponds to the desires and expectations of citizens.

Figure 5.1 illustrates both remarkable similarities and remarkable differences between schemes. In regard to the former, most respondents prefer entitlements to all four schemes to remain stable. That is, most of the Dutch apparently prefer no significant changes in social security arrangements. They prefer entitlements to remain stable, and they seem to be quite satisfied with existing benefit-income levels and probably also with the way income levels have developed across time.[56]

The figure also reveals remarkable difference between schemes as well as across time. Regarding the latter, the Dutch seem to support increasing entitlements to an increasing degree between 1995 and 2006. Preferences to decrease entitlements to old-age pensions, disability benefits, unemployment benefits, and social assistance decline between 1995 and 2006, while preferences to increase these entitlements rise simultaneously. Regarding the former, the figure reveals large differences between schemes. The number of people who favour decreasing entitlements to unemployment benefit exceeds for instance the number who favour decreasing entitlements to old-age pensions. Conversely, the share of people preferring to increase entitlements to disability benefits is much higher than those preferring to increase entitlements to unemployment benefits.

In sum, figure 5.1 reveals two important points. First, the Dutch generally prefer entitlements to benefits to remain as high or as low as they are. Second, support differs significantly across time and between different schemes. Mainly this last observation is of interest for this chapter, because it is not clear what increasing support for increasing entitlements actually signifies (compare chapter 2). Therefore, the next section is directed at examining the moral economy of Dutch social security institutions by examining the correspondence between norms embedded within the real schemes and the public's preferences.

[56] It is unfortunately not possible to examine whether this latter premise is true due to limitations of the data.

5.6 Transformations within the Moral Structure of Dutch Social Security Designs and the Public's Preferences

In the literature on the moral economy, a central notion is that public support for social security increases the more highly the moral structure of different schemes corresponds to the public's ideas on responsibility, legality, obligating reciprocity, and balanced reciprocity. In other words, congruity between social policy and preferences and expectations of the public at large will increase support for such policy. Hence, support for an arrangement will increase if reform corresponds highly to moral–cultural values supported by the public at large. This hypothesis is first tested with regard to social assistance. Therefore, information about attitudes towards social assistance is summarized on a 5-point scale (-- represents a (strong) decrease; ++ represents a (strong) increase) in table 5.2. Developments within the real social assistance scheme are presented in this table as well, using the same 5-point scale (compare table 5.1).

As figure 5.1 illustrates, Dutch support for increasing entitlements to social assistance increased between 1995 in 2006. The question is whether this could be explained by congruence between developments within this policy and Dutch preferences on these developments. Table 5.2 reveals that it probably is. The level of responsibility and obligating reciprocity are increasingly emphasized within the policy design. Accordingly, the Dutch public also prefers increased emphasis on these norms within social assistance. Also, the emphasis on balanced reciprocity remained stable within this policy and that also corresponds to the public's preferences. In regard to legality, the results reveal no congruity between policy and opinion. Legality became increasingly emphasized within the policy design, whereas the public does not prefer more emphasis on legality, but the difference is relatively small. The public does not, for example, prefer emphasis on this norm to decrease strongly, whereas in the actual policy emphasis on this norm increases. Moreover, table A5.2 in the appendix to this chapter reveals that the Dutch consider the legality of social assistance beneficiaries low anyway, because over 90 per cent of Dutch people believe that, in both 1995 and 2006, social assistance beneficiaries abused this scheme. In sum, policy developments correspond to the public's preferences in three out of four comparisons between policy developments and developments of attitudes. Because of this high level of

Table 5.2 Comparing transformations in the Dutch social assistance scheme and unemployment scheme to developments of public opinion

Social Assistance Scheme			Unemployment Scheme		
Moral concepts	Trend policy	Trend opinion	Moral concepts	Trend policy	Trend opinion
Responsibility	++	+	Responsibility	+	+
Legality	+	0	Legality	0	0
Obligating rec.	++	+	Obligating rec.	+	0
Balanced rec.	0	0	Balanced rec.	+	+

Source: *TISSER Solidarity Study*, Tilburg University 1995; *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

correspondence, it is likely that the increase in support for increasing entitlements to social assistance is a consequence of contemporary reform of this scheme.

The results in regard to developments in unemployment benefits are also summarized in table 5.2. Figure 5.1 illustrates increasing support for increasing entitlements to unemployment schemes between 1995 and 2006. Trends in developments within this policy and in public opinion reveal high synchronicity in three out of four comparisons between policy developments and developments of attitudes. In accordance with the public's preferences, balanced reciprocity and responsibility are increasingly emphasized within the unemployment design. The emphasis on legality did not significantly change within the policy design; this is also in accordance with the public's preferences. However, within the scheme, obligating reciprocity is increasingly emphasized, whereas the public prefers no change in regard to this norm. However, almost 90 per cent of the Dutch preferred the embeddedness of obligating reciprocity within the unemployment scheme in both 1995 and 2006 (see table A5.3 in the appendix to this chapter); this could indicate that the policy development corresponds to the public's preferences, provided that they did not develop simultaneously.[57] In sum, it is easy to understand the increasing support for increasing entitlements to unemployment benefits, because policy developments correspond to the public's preferences in regard to responsibility, legality, and balanced reciprocity.

[57] These results could be more informative if we knew the direction of causality. This development would be congruent if policy adapts to preferences of the public at large. At this point, I am unable to solve this problem. However, the question of causality is addressed in chapter 6.

Table 5.3 Comparing transformations in the Dutch old-age pension scheme and the Dutch disability scheme to developments in public opinion

Old-Age Pension Scheme			Disability Scheme		
Moral concepts	Trend policy	Trend opinion	Moral concepts	Trend policy	Trend opinion
Responsibility	0	0	Responsibility	+	+
Legality	+	+	Legality	++	+
Obligating rec.	NA	NA	Obligating rec.	++	0
Balanced rec.	0	0	Balanced rec.	+	0

Source: *TISSER Solidarity Study*, Tilburg University 1995; *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006

In regard to old-age pensions, table 5.3 demonstrates a remarkable synchronicity between policy developments and the public preferences on these developments. Emphasis on both responsibility and balanced reciprocity did not change within this scheme; this corresponds to the public's preferences. As we saw, legality was emphasized somewhat more strongly in the policy design, which is also in accordance with preferences of the Dutch public. It is worth noting, though, that, compared to the other schemes, a relatively low proportion of Dutch people consider the elderly as fraudulent. Therefore, it likely that the increase in support for increasing entitlements to old-age pensions demonstrated in figure 5.1 is a result of the stability of the norms of responsibility and balanced reciprocity embedded within this scheme as well as of an increased emphasis on legality.

Finally, table 5.3 demonstrates developments in regard to the disability policy. Support for generous disability benefits increased between 1995 and 2006 (see figure 5.1). This support could be a result of synchronicity between developments of embedded norms of responsibility and legality within the disability scheme and the preferences of the Dutch public. Responsibility and legality are increasingly emphasized within this policy, and that corresponds to the public's preferences. Within this scheme, however, obligating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity were increasingly emphasized, and this does not correspond to the public's preferences. In both 1995 and 2006, about 75 per cent of the Dutch preferred obligating reciprocity to be incorporated in the disability scheme (see table A5.3 in the appendix to this chapter). These preferences did not change, but obligating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity are increasingly incorporated within the scheme. Moreover, on average, about 45 per cent of the Dutch

preferred an increased embeddedness of the norm of balanced reciprocity within the disability scheme in 1995 as well as in 2006. Support for incorporation of these norms within the disability scheme increased slightly, but less than 5 per cent. Therefore, the increase in support for generous benefits could be explained by the congruity in regard to responsibility and legality. These results are less convincing, however, than the results in regard to the other three schemes that were examined. Therefore, we need to find out whether support for increasing entitlements to this scheme decreased after 2006. If that is the case, it is likely that this decrease is a result of the non-synchronicity between developments in the embedded norms of obligating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity within the scheme and the public's preferences. If support keeps increasing, then it is likely that the public attaches more importance to the incorporation of the values of responsibility and legality than to embedded norms of obligating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity within the disability scheme. Unfortunately, this information is not available yet. Future research should elaborate on this matter in more detail. Currently, I assume that the increase in support for increasing entitlements to disability benefits is a result of congruity between developments in the actual scheme and preferences in regard to responsibility and legality.

5.7 Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter examined the moral economy of Dutch social security institutions. In this way, the macro level of real social policy designs is included in this search for welfare state legitimacy. The results demonstrate that it is easy to understand increasing support for social security arrangements. The Dutch support these arrangements because they support the institutional ideology on which the policy designs are built. The moral contract between the Dutch authorities and the governed entails social security arrangements being based on reciprocal fairness, responsibility, and legality. Moreover, the Dutch support developments in this institutional ideology, meaning that they support normative reforms which enforce responsibility, legality, and two kinds of reciprocity (obligating and balanced). Therefore, the *increase* in Dutch welfare state

support does not mean that the Dutch still prefer generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements as various scholars suggest (compare chapters 1 and 2).

The results also demonstrate that the Dutch prefer different reform policies to be embedded within different social security schemes that are, in turn, targeted at different welfare beneficiaries. There are substantial differences in the norms that are incorporated within the four social security schemes examined in this chapter. In regard to the elderly – who the public considers to be relatively deserving (compare chapter 4) – the public prefers few changes in the relatively generous and unconditional old-age pension scheme; this is in accordance with real developments within this scheme. However, in regard to the social assistance scheme – targeted at a relatively 'undeserving' social category (compare chapter 4), obligating reciprocity increased within this scheme, and the public also prefers an increased emphasis on these norms within this scheme. In regard to the insurance-based unemployment scheme, in which balanced reciprocity increased between 1995 and 2006, the public also preferred an increase in these norms. Moreover, responsibility is also increasingly emphasized within this scheme; this is also in correspondence with the public's preferences. In regard to the disability scheme, support is a result of forcing the responsibility and desired behaviour of recipients to an increasing degree.

Moreover, the findings steer towards a reconsideration of the criteria distinguished within the deservingness literature. Scholars predominantly assume that the public uses criteria to assess whether people deserve state aid (cf. chapter 3; Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Appelbaum, 2002; Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Will, 1993). Or in other words, they assume that these criteria refer to people's behaviour. Whereas two criteria – neediness and identification – indeed refer to people's expectations, control over neediness and compliance do not (as demonstrated in chapter 4). The findings in this chapter suggest that these latter criteria rather refer to the institutional norms of responsibility and legality. As demonstrated in this chapter, the increasing emphasis on responsibility and legality within various schemes corresponds highly to the public's wishes and expectations of how these institutions should have developed. Therefore, it is not likely that welfare state support decreases as a consequence of welfare fraud or the inefficient way welfare states are organized, as

presumed by several scholars (discussed in chapter 1; cf. Becker, 2005; Coughlin, 1980; Goul Andersen, 1999; Lash, 1978; Pierson, 1991; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1985). In sum, the public blames moral hazard (due to self-inflicted poverty – responsibility – or non-compliant behaviour – illegality) on institutional failure rather than on the immoral behaviour of claimants themselves. Therefore, the Dutch seem to expect their social security institutions to prevent opportunities for immoral behaviour, and contemporary reforms indeed decrease such opportunities. Consequently, it is easy to understand why the Dutch support contemporary welfare state reforms.

Although this chapter demonstrated that welfare state legitimacy cannot sufficiently be understood without including the macro level of real social policy design, there is still one unanswered urgent question. This chapter demonstrated that institutional ideology links the macro level of social policy designs and the micro level of individual attitudes. However, the direction of causality remains unclear. Therefore, the next chapter addresses the causal relationship between policy and opinion.

Appendix to Chapter 5

Table A5.1 Perceptions on responsibility (%)

	no responsibility (at all)		*no distinct preference*		*(utter) responsibility*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006	1995	2006
To what extent can people bear personal responsibility for being…						
a single mother on social assistance	42	38	43	37	**15**	**25**
unemployed	40	39	47	34	**13**	**27**
old	76	76	18	15	6	9
disabled	76	82	22	15	2	3

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1403 N 2006= 2221

Table A5.2 Perceptions on legality (%)

	high legality		*moderate/ low legality*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
To what extent do you believe beneficiaries abuse the …				
social assistance scheme	9	7	91	93
unemployment scheme	8	7	92	93
old-age pension scheme	71	57	**29**	**43**
disability scheme	16	10	**84**	**90**

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1052 N 2006=1823

Table A5.3 Perceptions on obligating reciprocity in regard to four social security schemes (%)

	no		*yes*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
If not actively searching for a job,				
entitlements to social assistance should decline	21	16	**79**	**84**
entitlements to unemployment benefits should decline	12	11	88	89
entitlements to disability benefits should decline	27	26	73	74

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1105 N 2006=1751

Table A5.4 Perceptions on balanced reciprocity in regard to the social assistance scheme (%)

	no		*yes*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
Entitlements to social assistance benefits should be higher…				
if a beneficiary's former income was higher	76	80	23	20
if a beneficiary has paid more taxes in the past	77	80	23	20
if a beneficiary has worked many years in the past	46	53	54	47
Mean transformation			**-13/3=-4.3**	

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1105 N 2006=1751

Table A5.5 Perceptions on balanced reciprocity in regard to the unemployment scheme (%)

	no		*yes*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
Entitlements to unemployment benefits should be higher…				
if a beneficiary's former income was higher	57	57	43	43
if a beneficiary has paid more taxes in the past	58	53	42	47
if a beneficiary has worked many years in the past	39	29	61	71
Mean transformation			**15/3=5**	

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N1995=1082 N 2006=1763

Table A5.6 Perceptions on balanced reciprocity in regard to the old-age pension scheme (%)

	no		*yes*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
Entitlements to old-age pensions should be higher…				
for the elderly who have paid higher premiums in the past	63	62	37	38
for the elderly who have worked for more years in the past	56	56	44	44
for the elderly who have had paid employment in the past	53	59	47	41
Mean transformation			**-5/3= -1.7**	

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1245 N 2006=1991

Table A5.7 Perceptions on balanced reciprocity in regard to the disability scheme (%)

	no		*yes*	
Year	1995	2006	1995	2006
Entitlements to social disability benefits should be higher…				
if a beneficiary's former income was higher	56	54	44	46
if a beneficiary has paid more taxes in the past	52	49	48	51
if a beneficiary has worked many years in the past	61	60	39	41
Mean transformation			**7/3=2.3**	

Source: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University Rotterdam 2006
Note: N 1995=1108 N 2006=1850

Chapter 6

An Institutional Embeddedness of Welfare Opinions? The Link between Public Opinion and Social Policy in the Netherlands (1970–2004)

6.1 Introduction

Although the previous chapters examined why individuals support the welfare state, and related preferences at the micro level to institutional designs at the macro level, a number of unanswered questions remain. At the micro level, individuals are motivated to support welfare because of their personal economic interest and (concomitant) egalitarian values, and four moral criteria the public at large uses to judge who deserves help (compare chapters 3 and 4). These motives are also to some extent dependent upon the institutional context at the macro level (compare chapter 5). Chapter 5 demonstrated that developments in norms embedded within social security designs correspond highly to developments in the public's preferences about which norms should be embedded in these schemes. However, the direction of causality remains unclear. Therefore, this chapter addresses the question of the circumstances under which public opinion adjusts to policy designs and the cases in which policy designs are adapted to public opinion. Moreover, this chapter also examines why welfare institutions themselves are sometimes responsible for how welfare institutions transform, and why, under other circumstances, public opinion seems to drive welfare reforms. Neither the previous chapters nor existing studies answer this question. Rather, they tend to study just one direction of this relationship: either the opinion–policy nexus – in which policy adjusts to public opinion – or the policy–opinion nexus – in which public opinion adjusts to policy.

On the one hand, studies examining the policy–opinion nexus generally concentrate on investigating how different welfare regimes, introduced in Esping-Andersen's (1990) path-breaking book *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, educe particular welfare opinions (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Svallfors, 1997: 283). The main argument in these studies is that citizens approve of welfare arrangements present in their welfare regime and this 'proves' that there is an institutional influence on individual attitudes. These studies have received several critiques, but, above all, they are problematic because they cannot ascertain that institutions determine citizens' attitudes (see also Halvorsen, 2007: 253) because it is empirically difficult to prove the direction of causality in this manner. Also, studies such as these most often provide only minor support for the idea that attitudes are structured by regime type (compare Jæger, 2009). Moreover, several authors argue that, in the present era of 'permanent austerity' (Pierson, 2001b: 410), the internal consistency relied on by Esping-Andersen to cluster his welfare regimes may have decreased or even disappeared (Bannink and Hoogenboom, 2007; Hinrichs and Kangas, 2003; Kasza, 2002; Pfeifer, 2009). If this is the case, welfare regimes are not likely to structure welfare attitudes, because the structuring elements of welfare regimes themselves are then arbitrary in nature.

In addition, one study on the policy–opinion nexus considering welfare state support and social policy deviates from a welfare state regime perspective. Analysing the case of West and East Germany as a natural experiment, Svallfors (2010) demonstrates convergence of attitudes in West and East Germany. '[A]ttitudes in Eastern Germany are completely stable, while attitudes in Eastern Germany become, overtime, more similar to those in the West' (Svallfors, 2010: 119). Although this study is more convincing than those examining the policy–opinion nexus using welfare regimes, the convergence found in Svallfors's study is not necessarily a consequence of the effects of West German institutions on the attitudes of East Germans. It is, for example, also likely that East Germans slowly started to trust their government again after 'the East German system of social protection[, which] was in the long run an economically unsustainable way to prop up a system based on repression and lack of ideological legitimacy' (Svallfors, 2010: 123).

On the other hand, studies investigating the opinion–policy nexus have flaws as well. Micro-level theory states that individual opinions influence social policy because of their translation into political consequences (cf. Brooks and Manza, 2006; Korpi and Palme, 1998). Following Page and Shapiro's seminal article *Effects of Opinion on Policy* (1983), numerous studies have attempted to verify two questions. One, does public opinion affect social policy? If so, to what degree? Obviously, some authors argue that there is only a modest influence (Jones, 1994; Page and Shapiro, 1983), whereas others argue that public opinion is very important (Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson, 1995). These conclusions stand or fall with the researchers' own arbitrary norms and ideas about what exactly constitutes a strong or a modest influence. Furthermore, as Cook et al. (2002) show, although policy elites concerned with social security frequently invoke public opinion, these invocations are seldom empirically informed.

Both the policy–opinion nexus and the opinion–policy nexus have been subject to empirical investigation, but, despite the idea that reciprocal influences are also plausible, the number of studies integrating both relationships is scarce. As Svallfors argues, 'Within some boundary limits, the relationship [between institutions and orientations] is instead a probabilistic one as well as one of mutual dependency and development. Certain institutions tend to make some orientations more likely than others; given a certain set of orientations, some institutions are more easily implemented or changed than others' (Svallfors, 2006: 10). The absence of any empirical examinations of this mutual relationship is a shortcoming in the existing literature. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of micro data. As Korpi and Palme (1998: 682) state, '… the empirical testing of the macro-micro links among institutions and the formation of interest and coalitions provides a major challenge for social scientists, but comparative micro-data currently are lacking'. For these reasons, Mettler and Soss (2004: 56) argue that we need studies with 'wide-ranging empirical research to explore this agenda.'

One of the few studies that investigate the mutual relationship between policy and public opinion is Sharp's *The Sometime Connection* (1999), which shows that there is a 'sometime connection' between policy and opinion. Sometimes policy seems to determine public opinion and sometimes public opinion seems to shape social policy. However, Sharp does not explain why social policy sometimes seems to follow the

public's preferences, whereas it does not in other circumstances. Neither does she explain why it sometimes works the other way around: why does public opinion adjust to existing social policy in certain cases, while being resistant to policy influences in other cases? Building on Sharp's idea that the direction of the relationship may depend on the policy being considered, the present chapter attempts to discover under which circumstances public opinion shapes social policy and under which circumstances social policy shapes public opinion. This chapter examines the relationship in the best possible way using existing data and addresses the following central question: *In which policy areas do social policy designs follow public preferences and when does public opinion follow existing policy designs and why?* The next section elaborates on existing theory before posing a new explanation for the connection between social policy and public opinion. Following this discussion, this possible explanation is tested using longitudinal data for the Netherlands.

6.2 The Opinion–Policy Nexus and the Policy–Opinion Nexus

There are two dominant ideas about the link between policy and public opinion. The first focuses on reasons why public opinion supposedly influences social policy. The second focuses on why social policy is expected to influence public opinion. In the following, I outline both of these ideas.

In relation to the opinion–policy nexus, the key to understanding how policy preferences determine policy outcomes lies in the so-called power resources model (Korpi, 1983). The power resources model states that public opinion will influence policy through two processes. First, public opinion can assert its influence on social policy indirectly through the voting ballot. Social actors – individuals or collective actors – are differentially provided with the ability to punish or reward other actors (Korpi, 1983). In other words, once people have enough power resources at their disposal, they can determine the policy-formation process and the outcomes of this process. Class struggle, a conflict over the allocation of material wealth and life chances, is translated into electoral ties between class position and political parties: members of the working class have generally voted for leftist parties and members of the middle class have

commonly voted for parties on the right. 'The simplest explanation for this widespread pattern is simple economic self-interest. The leftist parties present themselves as instruments of social change in the direction of equality; the lower-income groups support them in order to become economically better off, while the higher-income groups oppose them in order to maintain their economic advantages. The statistical facts can then be taken as evidence of the importance of class factors' (Lipset, 1981: 239). In short, left-wing tendencies in the working class and right-wing tendencies in the middle class may be explained by their respective longing for, and aversion to, an expensive, generous welfare state that aims to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor. Through the electoral process, public opinions, driven by class differences, thus assert influence on welfare state policies.

Second, public opinion may also directly influence social policy through the fear of electoral punishment. Politicians may fear future electoral punishment in reaction to unpopular policies, consequently abstaining from unpopular decisions. In various studies, scholars have argued that, in order to sustain large, expensive welfare states, public support – in the form of policy preferences – is of crucial importance (Brooks and Manza, 2006; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, 2002). Political parties attempting to reduce the size and costs of the welfare state run the risk of being punished during future elections. Brooks and Manza (2006: 818) note that 'government officials have incentives to incorporate policy preferences into policymaking so as to avoid voter sanctions in the form of electoral defeat or public protest.' This behaviour is also termed the politics of blame avoidance (Weaver, 1986).

For the policy–opinion nexus, the question to be answered is whether and how social policy determines welfare attitudes. Before this question is answered, note that 'policies, once established, act as institutions, because they create a framework in which certain resources, rules, and norms are imposed upon citizens' (Iowi, 1964: 644).[58] Therefore, institutional theory applies to this relationship. Durkheim (1951), for example, argued that institutions determine individual opinion, by contending that utilitarianism provided no explanation for group solidarity, rather institutions did, by producing norms which citizens internalize. In doing so, Durkheim downplayed the role

[58] Compare footnote 47, page 97.

of the individual. Hence, the idea that institutions influence individual opinions is almost as old as sociology itself.

A reason frequently given for a supposed influence of institutions on public opinion is that citizens do not form their opinions independently, but that they do so within a specific institutional context. The 'most profound decisions about justice are not made by individuals as such, but by individuals thinking within and on behalf of institutions' (Douglas, 1987: 124). Public policy defines the boundaries of a political community; it defines membership, and as a consequence it also defines who deserves (financial) help and who does not. In addition to defining boundaries, public policy also directs public perceptions of societal problems, policy agendas, and governmental action by identifying target groups and defining solutions (Mettler and Soss, 2004). Consequently, the 'individual tends to leave the important decisions to his institutions while busying himself with tactics and details' (Douglas, 1987: 111).

This institutional influence on public opinion is somewhat conditional: the public has to be convinced that these institutions are legitimate. Rothstein (1998: 217) proposes three conditions for institutional legitimacy: institutions should install a feeling of trust that others will cooperate; state leaders should put forward a moral argument that what is to be achieved by this cooperation is a morally just cause; and institutions should be successful in showing that the institution that is going to be responsible for the implementation of this morally good cause is a 'just institution.' Together, these three reasons are supposed to create public support. Hence, '[w]here "good reasons" for a certain set of social provisions are given, people are more likely to comply and to sustain the institutional asset. It is the public affirmation and recognition of welfare policies that provides the "normative fundament" on which the institutional architecture rests' (Mau 2003: 31-32). In other words, individuals approve of social security institutions not only out of personal interest, but also – compare chapter 5 – due to the embeddedness of moral norms in these institutions, which influence the legitimacy of transactions due to a moral economy (Bowles and Gintis, 2000; Mau, 2003; Ullrich, 2002).

Given the theoretical arguments for how public opinion might influence welfare institutions as well as how welfare institutions might influence public opinion, the next

question to be answered is under which circumstances which theory is applicable. As we saw in the introduction, Sharp (1999) investigated the interaction between both theoretical positions. Sharp concludes: depending upon the choice of policy domain, sometimes policy precedes opinions and sometimes opinions precede policy. Although Sharp's study is a good attempt at investigating the mutual connection between social policy and public opinion, Sharp does not explain this *sometime connection*; the study does not clarify when and why this connection differs by policy domain. In the next section, I argue that, by borrowing some ideas deriving from Pierson's (1996) theory on old and new politics, an explanation can be provided. The next section explores how.

6.3 Explaining a Mutual Connection between Social Policy and Public Opinion

Pierson (1996) argues that there is a fundamental difference between what he calls the old and the new politics of the welfare state. Old politics refers to the policy processes during the period of welfare state establishment and expansion. Old politics was about building and designing welfare policies. In this process, politics (and through politics, public opinion) played an important role. The process was not hindered by path dependency or policy feedback mechanisms, as I will discuss below, but was driven by politicians who were still inventing policies (or institutions) in an era of welfare state expansion. Therefore, the political process offers an explanation for the introduction and expansion of 'new' social policy domains, in which public opinion supposedly influences policy designs as discussed above: through politics, through the power resources model, and through mechanisms of blame avoidance.

In contrast to the old politics of welfare state expansion, new politics is about the decline of the welfare state through retrenchment.[59] Pierson's main argument is that reforming highly institutionalized policies appears to be difficult because of path dependency and feedback mechanisms. Path dependency signifies that 'once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high' (Levi, 1997: 28);

[59] In this chapter, retrenchment refers to Pierson's (1994) umbrella definition of this notion (compare chapter 3).

this implies that the costs of retrenchment following a period of institutional welfare expansion are high. According to Pierson (2000: 251), this concept of path dependency is best captured by the idea of increasing returns, which could also be described as self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes. Following this feedback mechanism logic, existing policies seem to determine the options for future policies (hence, also transformations of these policies) to a high degree. Given these self-reinforcing mechanisms, there is little space for politicians, or the public, to influence highly institutionalized policy designs that arose during a period of welfare state expansion. On the contrary, the public has to form its attitudes within this context, making it likely that the public has a bias towards established and highly institutionalized policies. The study by Gusmano et al. (2002: 731) supports this argument. The authors show that '... lessons about the performance of institutions [...] represent the most important effect of existing policy on public attitudes.' In addition, institutional theory claims that it is important that welfare state institutions receive public approval while being established, but thereafter, institutions begin to control the collective memory of their members (Douglas, 1987: 112; Mau, 2003). Hence, institutional theory also supports these claims that public opinion is most influential during the establishment of institutions; thereafter, institutions determine individual opinions under the precondition that good reasons for trusting these institutions are given.

Once a welfare state is established however, new policy domains will also be introduced. For example, when retrenchment is the main goal of welfare state policies (in order to contain costs and adapt to demographic changes), new policies directed at increasing labour market participation and reintegration will be introduced (compare the discussion in regard to commodifying reform in chapter 3; see also Achterberg et al., 2010a; Gilbert, 2004). With regard to this relatively new policy domain, the discussed mechanisms of path dependency and feedback are not applicable. This means that, in general, two types of policy exist. First, there are policies that were introduced during the period of welfare state establishment and expansion, which are now highly institutionalized and thus difficult to change. Second, since the 1980s, relatively new policies have emerged, policies that are still evolving and developing, which implies that they are still easily changed. A recent study by Albrekt Larsen (2008b) supports the idea

that public opinion can influence relatively new, not yet highly institutionalized, policy domains. Using data for Australia, Albrekt Larsen shows that public opinion influences the relatively new social policy domain of active labour market policy. Because the general public prefers that different active labour market strategies be applied to young, unemployed workers in comparison to older, unemployed workers, exceptions for these two groups are present in actual social policy. Young people are required to meet harsher unemployment criteria than older workers. These new policy domains, which include policies such as childcare and active labour market policy, contrast with highly institutionalized and established policy domains evident in traditional social security schemes, such as social assistance programmes, unemployment schemes, old-age pension schemes or disability schemes.[60]

In sum, depending upon the policy domain, welfare policy will be more or less open to the influence of public opinion. Well-established and highly institutionalized policy subjects are likely to determine public opinion on these policies (compare Gusmano et al., 2002). When policy subjects are relatively new, public opinion can influence these policy designs (compare Douglas, 1987; Mau, 2003). This brings us to the following expectations: in the case of highly established and institutionalized policy areas such as unemployment schemes or old-age pensions, public opinion will follow existing social policy designs *(hypothesis 6.1)*, and in the case of policy areas where the social policy design has not yet been fully established, such as labour market activation, social policy designs will follow public opinion (*hypothesis 6.2*). In section 6.5, these two

[60] Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) is also applied to certain traditional policy domains, such as social assistance schemes, unemployment schemes, and disability schemes (compare chapter 5). However, ALMP is a separate policy area that is still evolving. First of all, the relatively new ALMP and traditional policy that may be affected by ALMP strive to reach different objectives. The purpose of the traditional social security schemes is income protection of citizens exposed to social risks. The purpose of ALMP, however, is not income protection by giving social security, but to prevent benefit dependency by taking measures to reintegrate recipients into the labour market. One could argue that reintegration into the labour market has always been an important aim within the Dutch unemployment scheme. However, that was only in theory, in practice the purpose was to protect the unemployed against poverty as a result of their lost income by providing quite generous wage-related unemployment benefits. Second of all, politicians treat active labour market policy as an area that is different from traditional social security schemes. Moreover, execution of the different policy areas is often stationed in different institutions. Implementation of ALMP is usually not a responsibility of institutions responsible for social assistance and unemployment benefits.

hypotheses are tested empirically using Dutch longitudinal data. First, I outline the data and methodology.

6.4 Data and Measures

In order to test the hypotheses stated above, longitudinal data are needed, particularly data that cover a long period of time and multiple policy areas. Therefore, in this chapter the representative survey data *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands*, introduced in chapter 2, is used. These data[61] include information on support for unemployment schemes, old-age pensions, and childcare provision. These surveys contain general questions on support for the welfare state and questions on support for specific social security arrangements. I analyse the data in two steps. I start by measuring the effect of public opinion on social policy using a time-series model. This model measures the aggregate effect of public opinion on social policy. Subsequently, I measure the effect of policy on public opinion by applying a multilevel model that measures the effect of policy on individual-level opinions.

For the time-series analyses, public preferences for more or less expenditure on social security is measured at the aggregate level by a series of four items measuring attitudes to unemployment, disability, and pension schemes, and attitudes about childcare facilities. Principal component analysis showed that these items could be combined into a scale (alpha=.74).[62] Respondents were asked to indicate whether unemployment schemes, old-age pensions, and disability schemes are 1: too good, 2: sufficient, or 3: insufficient. Attitudes on childcare were measured by asking respondents whether the government should build cheaper childcare facilities. Answer options are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1: strongly agree to 5: strongly disagree.

[61] The total sample size is 40,147; missing data total 5,413. Data are available for a total of 23 years. Response rates for the various years of data used here are approximately 60 per cent. The data are available via the data archive DANS: see http://nesstar.dans.knaw.nl/webview/.

[62] Although I would have preferred to measure preferences on expenditure for each single policy domain, I have to use a scale instead. Preferences on expenditure on the relatively new social policy domain of the active labour market policy or childcare are not available. Moreover, using a scale means that the sample size is as large as possible.

For the multilevel analyses, I am unable to include all four items because principal component analysis showed that these items do not fall into one dimension at the individual level. However, by excluding attitudes on childcare facilities and including attitudes towards social assistance, I was able to create a scale based on attitudes towards expenditure on social security benefits with a robust alpha score (alpha =.72). A high score on either scale indicates high support for increasing expenditure on social security arrangements.

In addition, I also use data from the OECD (2004) social expenditure database (SOCX), which was also introduced in chapter 2. In this chapter, I use data covering expenditure on both well-established, highly institutionalized welfare domains and on relatively new and evolving welfare policies. With regard to the former, expenditure data on unemployment benefits and old-age pensions are used to measure traditional social policies. For the latter, I use expenditure data on active labour market policies. Unfortunately, data covering Dutch expenditure on childcare policy are not available before 1995. Consequently, for reasons of a sample size of only five years, this relatively new policy domain cannot be included in the analyses. In this chapter, it is not useful to use the generosity index introduced in chapter 2. To investigate the temporal order between real expenditure and attitudes on expenditure, attitudes on generosity are not relevant.

As mentioned above, to test the mutual relationship between public opinion and social policy empirically, two different methods are used. I start by using multilevel regression analysis to test the influence of social policy on public opinion. The advantage of multilevel analysis is that it allows for the inclusion of both individual and higher level factors in explaining the dependent variable. Multilevel analyses are preferable for testing the policy–opinion nexus because opinion data are nested within a given year; people within a given context tend to be more similar to one another than people from two different contexts. In using this method, attitudes are measured and analysed at the individual level, and therefore public opinion in one year is independent of public opinion in the year before. However, observations of public opinion at the aggregate level are not independent of each other, meaning that standard OLS regression assumptions cannot be met. I performed four separate analyses using time-lag variables

for t-1, t-2, t-3, and t-4.[63] Although the literature assumes that public opinion adapts itself to social policy within one year (Sharp, 1999), there is little empirical research to show how long it takes before policy is affected by public opinion. Therefore, I use a total of four time-lag variables to test the adaptability of policy to public opinion within one four-year election period. The intraclass correlation for the data is .11, which tells us that multilevel analysis is a sound methodological choice.

For the analyses of the opinion–policy nexus, I have chosen to use time-series analyses. Multilevel analysis is not possible here because policy observations, which are now the dependent variable, are not independent of each other. After all, it is very likely that policies in a certain year are very similar to policies in the preceding year. Time-series analysis with autocorrelations allows us to correct for this path dependency of social policy observations – giving a more accurate picture of the associations involved. As I did with the multilevel analyses, I use four time-lag variables for the time-series analyses as well, but I deviate from the literature at this point because I am not entirely convinced that public opinion can adapt itself to policy within one year. Therefore, to allow for a longer period in which public opinion adapts itself to policy and to remain consistent with the first analyses, I have decided to use the same time-lag variables of t-1, t-2, t-3, and t-4. Furthermore, in all analyses, I control for standardized unemployment because unemployment levels can influence both the policy–opinion nexus and the opinion–policy nexus (compare for example Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Svallfors, 1997). Moreover, by controlling for unemployment rates, I cover the possibility that public opinion influences real expenditure in such a way that real expenditure, for example, decreases just a little instead of a lot as a result of public opinion. A major motivation to decrease real expenditure in order to prevent increasing welfare costs would be if unemployment rates increased. Because I control for unemployment rates, such an indirect pressure of public opinion on real expenditure is not likely.

[63] Although causality cannot be ascertained, using time-lag variables does give some insight into the temporal order of policy and public opinion. In this manner, I provide the best possible analysis using existing data.

6.5 Relationship between Relatively Established Social Policy Domains and Public Opinion

In this section, the results of the empirical testing of the first central hypotheses of this chapter are presented. I test whether public opinion does or does not influence the well-established and highly institutionalized policies of unemployment and old-age pensions as discussed above, simultaneously considering whether the opposite relationship exists, namely that expenditure on these policies has the expected strong influence on public opinion. The expectation is that public opinion strongly influences relatively new active labour market policies. The opposite effect, that active labour market policies would influence public opinion, is expected to be absent or weak.

In relation to the opinion–policy nexus, the results of the time-series analyses are as expected with regard to old-age pensions: public opinion (with time lags of one, two, three, and four years) has no influence on real expenditure for old-age pension schemes (see table 6.1). The strength of the parameters is weak and statistically insignificant. These results confirm the expectation: there is no policy responsiveness to public opinion on pension expenditure. In contrast, public opinion has a positive effect on unemployment expenditure with a time lag of two and three years, but it does not have an effect with a time lag of one or four years (see table 6.2). Public opinion minus one and minus four years has no significant influence on actual unemployment policy; this is in line with expectations. However, if citizens prefer higher expenditures, actual expenditure on unemployment schemes follows public opinion after two and three years. It would appear, therefore, that unemployment benefit schemes are more susceptible to public opinion than pension schemes.

In relation to the policy–opinion nexus examined with multilevel analysis, the analyses show that the public adapt their opinion to actual expenditures on old-age pensions (see table 6.3).[64] Parameters for this variable are positive and strong for all

[64] The small reduction in -2LL achieved by the developed model, as well as the mainly small, significant coefficients, are a result of the small sample size of the years involved. The individual-level N is large, but the model used here includes only macro variables because I am not interested in individual effects on public opinion. However, I do not expect any spurious effects because of that, because it is not at all likely that individual-level variables, such as income level or gender, vary in accordance with the variation in real welfare state expenditure within the

time lags; hence, expenditure on pensions influences opinions on expenditure after one, two, three, and four years. Once again, the influence of unemployment expenditure on public opinion is not in line with expectations. In this case, these results seem to stem from controlling for unemployment rates. When I omit this control variable, the results are in line with expectations: public opinion follows actual expenditure on unemployment benefits.[65] It seems that support for higher expenditures on unemployment increases if the unemployment rate increases (probably due to an increasing risk of becoming unemployed). However, support declines if actual expenditure on unemployment benefits increases because an increase in taxes would be necessary to cover the increase in expenditure. In sum, the first hypothesis is confirmed. Public preferences for higher expenditure do not determine expenditures on well-

Table 6.1 The influence of public opinion on traditional, highly institutionalized social policy (old- age pension scheme); four time-series analyses

	Traditional policy expenditures (old age pensions, entries are B's[1])			
	public opinion T-1	public opinion T-2	public opinion T-3	public opinion T-4
Public opinion on social security expenditure	-0.04 (0.16)	0.08 (0.17)	0.04 (0.17)	0.20 (0.23)
Unemployment rate	0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.001 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.05)
Rho (AR)	0.84*** (0.12)	0.81*** (0,14)	0.57 (0.35)	0.66+ (0.34)
Constant	7.09*** (0.42)	7.40*** (0.40)	7.29*** (0.33)	7.48*** (0.49)
RSS (adjusted)	0.74	0.66	0.69	0.6
Log-likelihood	-0 .67	-0.89	-0.41	-0.74
N†	14 (8)	15 (9)	14 (10)	16 (11)

Sources: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) data series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands (1970-2004)*; OECD social expenditure data (SOCX)
Notes: ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05 + p<.10. † Number of cases at the beginning of the series (number of cases at the end of the series). [1] Standard error in parentheses.

time-period of the analyses. Also note that the sample size of the years involved varies due to the time lags used in the analyses.

[65] These results are not presented here but are available from the author upon request.

established, highly institutionalized policy domains. On the contrary, expenditure on these traditional policies determines public preferences for more or less expenditure on these policies.

6.6 Relationship between Relatively New Social Policy Domains and Public Opinion

The second hypothesis – that social policy designs adapt to public opinion when a relatively new and not yet institutionalized policy area is involved – is confirmed. With regard to the opinion–policy nexus, the results show that preferences for increased social security expenditure have a positive and significant effect (even despite the low sample size) on active labour market policy expenditure (see table 6.4). Public opinion also influences active labour market policy up to three years after these attitudes have been measured. With regard to the policy–opinion nexus (see table 6.3), however,

Table 6.2 The influence of public opinion on traditional, highly institutionalized social policy (unemployment scheme); four time-series analyses

	Traditional policy expenditures (unemployment benefits, entries are B's[1])			
	Public opinion T-1	Public opinion T-2	Public opinion T-3	Public opinion T-4
Public opinion on social security expenditure	0.20+ (0.11)	0.23* (0.10)	0.34** (0.10)	0.04 (0.15)
Unemployment rate	0.20*** (0.03)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.15** (0.03)
Rho (AR1)	0.55+ (0.26)	0.34 (0.31)	0.27 (0.34)	0.56+ (0.30)
Constant	1.13** (0.28)	1.38*** (0.20)	1.23*** (0.19)	1.74*** (0.31)
RSS (adjusted)	0.61	0.3	0.33	0.26
Log-likelihood	-1.86	-5.67	-5.09	-5.67
N†	14 (8)	15 (9)	14 (10)	16 (11)

Sources: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) data series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands (1970-2004)*; OECD social expenditure data (SOCX)

Notes: ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05 + p<.10. † Number of cases at the beginning of the series (number of cases at the end of the series). [1] Standard error in parentheses.

public opinion does not follow trends in expenditure on active labour market policy. In sum, the results substantiate *hypothesis 6.2*. Public opinion strongly influences active labour market policy expenditures, whereas actual expenditures do not or only scarcely influence public opinion.

6.7 Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter addresses the last step needed for a better understanding of social security legitimacy, that is, in what policy areas do social policy designs precede public opinion and when does public opinion precede existing policy designs and why? The existing

Table 6.3 The influence of traditional, highly institutionalized social policy and relatively new active labour market policy (ALMP) on public opinion; four multilevel analyses

	Public opinion (entries are B's[1])			
	Policy T-1	Policy T-2	Policy T-3	Policy T -4
Constant	-70.22**	-57.74***	-33.34***	-45.21**
	(16.91)	(8.48)	(6.47)	(11.35)
Year	0.04**	0.03***	0.02***	0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)
Old-age pension expenditures	0.15*	0.11***	0.14***	0.15**
	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)
UEB expenditures	-0.12*	-0.14***	-0.10***	-0.08+
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)
ALMP expenditures	-0.24	-0.27*	0.05	-0.03
	(0.17)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.13)
Unemployment Rate	0.04***	0.03***	0.01***	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
-2ll null model†	31215.15	29685.42	29685.42	28181.98
-2ll current model	31179.15	29628.50	29617.03	28141.99
N individual	34,532	32,882	32,882	30.779
N year (range)	17 (1980-2000)	16 (1980-1998)	16 (1980-1998)	15 (1980-1997)

Sources: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) data series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands (1970-2004)*; OECD social expenditure data (SOCX)

Notes: ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05 + p<.10. † Intra class correlations of null model equal 0.11. [1] Standard error in parentheses.

literature fails to answer this question. This gap in the literature exists mainly due to a lack of micro data. In this chapter, I used longitudinal survey data from 1970 to 2004 in the Netherlands as well as social expenditure data to test this relationship between social policy and public opinion. Although my analyses are an improvement from previous research (in which welfare regimes count as the institutional component in examining the policy–opinion nexus and in which studies on the opinion–policy nexus are seldom empirically informed), my analyses inevitably still contain shortcomings due to the limited availability of multiple years of data within the data series. Nevertheless, although I cannot overcome the shortcoming of the small sample size (which is often a shortcoming in studying trends, but not a reason to omit trend studies), it is possible to control for the dependency of observations in relation to the dependent variables in the analyses by using time-series analysis as well as multilevel analysis.

In general, the analyses indicate that there is no evidence of policy responsiveness to public opinion where traditional and highly institutionalized social

Table 6.4 The influence of public opinion on relatively new, and not yet institutionalized social policy; four time-series analyses

	New policy expenditures (active labour market policy, entries are B's[1])			
	Public opinion T-1	Public opinion T-2	Public opinion T-3	Public opinion T-4
Public opinion on social security expenditure	0.21** (0.06)	0.23* (0.09)	0.30** (0.07)	0.15 (0.12)
Unemployment rate	-0.03 (0.19)	-0.04+ (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04+ (0.02)
Rho (AR1)	0.56+ (0.30)	0.44 (0.37)	0.38 (0.38)	0.32 (0.41)
Constant	1.31*** (0.16)	1.30*** (0.17)	1.16*** (0.14)	1.36*** (0.22)
RSS (adjusted)	0.19	0.19	0.15	0.16
Log-likelihood	-9.91	-8.65	-10.35	-8.53
N†	14 (8)	15 (9)	14 (10)	16 (11)

Sources: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) data series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands (1970-2004)*; OECD social expenditure data (SOCX)
Notes: ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05 + p<.10. † Number of cases at the beginning of the series (number of cases at the end of the series). [1] Standard error in parentheses.

security policies are concerned. However, when it comes to new and less institutionalized policy areas such as labour market activation programmes, public opinion does seem to have its expected influence on these policies. This is a remarkable and important conclusion which enhances existing studies that stress the importance of support for traditional social security policies. Public opinion seems to matter more in the case of new policy domains that are not yet fully established because politicians are still shaping these policies. In the case of traditional, highly institutionalized policy areas, policy feedback mechanisms induce path dependency, which leaves little room for the public to influence these policies.

My analyses also show that precisely the opposite relationship exists regarding the influence of social policy on public opinion. Retrenchment of unemployment or pension policy seems to lead to support for decreasing expenditure on these traditional and highly institutionalized social security arrangements. In contrast, relatively new policies, such as labour market activation, do not influence public opinion. This conclusion demonstrates, in contrast to scholars arguing that generous and extensive welfare states still enjoy high support (cf. Becker, 2005; Boeri et al., 2001; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Jæger, 2006b; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Taylor-Gooby, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2002), that retrenchment of traditional welfare policy could also correspond to the public's preferences.

Finally, I want to stress that political elites, or the media, or other more subtle processes can independently influence social policy or public opinion. Obviously, political elites independently affect social policy designs (as shown by Albrekt Larsen and Goul Andersen, 2009), and, at the same time, political elites and mass media affect public opinion (compare Cook et al., 2002; Padgett and Johns, 2010). Clearly, the relationship between public opinion and social policy is likely to be more complex than suggested in this chapter. However, I investigated the extreme poles of the relationship, meaning public opinion on the one side, and social policy on the other. In between these extremes, all kinds of processes that influence either one of the poles are possible. However, this chapter demonstrated that, excluding possible other effects, the relationship between social policy and public opinion is in accordance to the expectations developed in this chapter. Future research should shed light on other

factors and processes influencing social policy and public opinion, for example research in which the relationship is controlled for effect via mass media or political elites.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Discussion
Welfare State Preferences and Welfare State Reforms Inextricably Intertwined

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to better understand what is meant by general support for the welfare state. At the start of this study, I observed an alleged discrepancy between people's preferences and welfare state policies. Whereas on the one hand various studies demonstrate that public support for generous welfare state arrangements remained high or in some countries, for example the Netherlands, increased across time, actual policy designs changed in the opposite direction and became increasingly sober and conditional. This mismatch between preferences and welfare state transformations became the starting point to research in detail whether and why the public continues to support welfare state arrangements.

In essence, the conclusions of empirical attitude studies measuring public support for the welfare state raise doubts about the validity of these studies for several reasons. One could reasonably expect that public support for generous welfare arrangements should decrease across time rather than increase or remain high. In parliamentary democracies, it is not likely that the public opinion of the electorate and public policy would deviate over a long time period. In Western welfare states, and also in the Netherlands, welfare state transformations towards increasing conditionality and decreasing generosity started in the early 1980s (cf. Esping-Andersen, 2001; Giddens, 1998; Gilbert, 2004; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Van der Veen, 2009; Van Oorschot, 2006b). Therefore, it is not likely that public opinion developed in the opposite direction.

This is, however, precisely what is suggested by empirical attitude studies (cf. Becker, 2005; Boeri et al., 2001; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Jæger, 2006b; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Taylor-Gooby, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2002). Also, developments in electoral preferences suggest a less clear-cut discrepancy between citizens' preferences in regard to welfare state arrangements and welfare state politics. Public support for traditional leftist parties, which generally prefer generous and extensive welfare states, decreased across time. Simultaneously, public support for political parties in favour of neoliberal policy, which basically entails support for sober and conditional welfare state arrangements, increased (see figure 2.1 in chapter 2; compare also Achterberg et al., 2010a: 13). Moreover, processes such as increasing prosperity (cf. Pierson, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991; Wilensky, 1975), increasing individualization (cf. Giddens, 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Kaase and Newton, 1995), and demographic developments that increase welfare claimant inflow and consequently welfare expenditure (cf. Alesina et al., 2001; Arts and Muffels, 2001; Bonoli et al., 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2004), could each erode solidarity, leading to decreased welfare state support. Finally, developments within public opinion reveal some conflicting trends. In contrast to studies demonstrating high or increasing support for generous welfare states, other studies show a high suspicion of welfare fraud (Coughlin, 1980: 113-117; Goul Andersen, 1999; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1985: 132-133) and high welfare chauvinism (Bay and Pedersen, 2006; Halvorsen, 2007; Van der Waal et al., 2010; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007) among the public at large. Therefore, this study aimed to get beneath the surface of general support for the welfare state. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of popular welfare state support, the following central question is examined: to what extent does the Dutch public support welfare state arrangements and why? And how is this related to transformations of the welfare state?

Before closing this study, I present the thematic findings of the research reported in each of the various chapters in section 7.2. Although the case study choice of this research is the Dutch welfare state (see chapter 1 for a discussion on this point), the results have implications that are important beyond the Dutch welfare state. The value of the findings concerning Dutch welfare state legitimacy in understanding legitimacy in other Western welfare states is discussed in this section as well. The theoretical

implications of the findings are discussed in section 7.3. Section 7.4 unravels several remaining discrepancies within welfare state legitimacy research and offers explanations for a persistent blind spot in the field of welfare state research. Finally, section 7.5 outlines the similarity between contemporary politics and the findings presented in this study.

7.2 Thematic Findings

This research reveals a number of broader themes and findings that add to the current state of the art of welfare state (legitimacy) research. In general, the findings reveal three conclusions that extend previous research in the field. First, welfare state support and real welfare policies are inextricably intertwined. Individual welfare preferences cannot sufficiently be understood if the reform of various welfare state policies is not considered simultaneously. Second, support for welfare state reforms contains several theoretical and empirical dimensions. When just one general support dimension is considered, inaccurate claims about support can occur. An example of such a claim appears to be that public support for generous and unconditional welfare states has remained high across time. Third, it is not merely economic self-interest that explains individual welfare state support. The findings of this study demonstrate that it is not self-evident that people oppose welfare state reforms as soon as reforms decrease their economic interest, nor is it self-evident that people support welfare state reforms if reforms increase people's economic self-interest. Moral conceptions also drive support for welfare state reforms. These main findings are summarized below.

7.2.1 Welfare State Preferences and Welfare State Policy Inseparable

A first conclusion of this study is that welfare state legitimacy cannot adequately be understood without simultaneously examining welfare state policy. Previous research that concluded that support for generous welfare arrangements has increased across time did not simultaneously investigate the possibility of support for welfare state reform (compare discussion in chapter 1). The research reported in this study demonstrates in several ways that welfare attitudes and actual welfare policy are

inextricably intertwined. Chapter 2 shows that the meaning of general welfare state support remains vague if policy designs themselves are not controlled for when welfare state preferences are being examined. Whereas previous studies conclude that preferences to decrease or increase welfare state expenditure or benefit-income levels can simply be interpreted as support for generous welfare state arrangements, chapter 2 demonstrates that the meaning of these preferences is more complex. It appears imperative to control these preferences for real policy developments, since welfare policies have changed considerably across time. Contemporary Dutch welfare reforms caused real welfare policies to become less generous and more conditional across time. This study shows that, when preferences to increase or decrease welfare state expenditure or benefit entitlements are controlled for real policy developments, the interpretation that support for generous welfare arrangements remains high could also signify exactly the opposite: public support for sober and conditional welfare state arrangements.

The inseparability of welfare preferences and welfare policy is demonstrated in more detail in chapter 5, where I examine the moral economy of four Dutch social security institutions. This moral economy refers to a tacit moral contract between the authorities and the governed based on a deep-rooted societal consensus in regard to reciprocal fairness and justice principles that should underlie legitimate economic transactions (Kohli, 1987; Mau, 2003; Scott, 1976; Svallfors, 2006; Thompson, 1971). Social security arrangements basically entail transactions between taxpayers (via the state) and welfare recipients (Mau, 2003: 32). The findings reveal that transformations of norms embedded within four Dutch social security designs – old-age pensions, unemployment, social assistance, and disability schemes – correspond to a high degree to the public's preferences about how these schemes should have developed. In the Netherlands, social security designs have become increasingly conditional and restricted, and public preferences simultaneously developed in the same way. Stated differently, the Dutch support contemporary welfare state reforms to a high degree, provided that these transformations do not conflict with norms concerning legality, responsibility, and reciprocal fairness that define the moral economy of Dutch social security institutions.

Moreover, chapter 6 demonstrates that there is a reciprocal causal relationship between social policy and public opinion, the direction of which depends on the choice of policy domain. The existing literature on welfare state legitimacy fails to answer adequately when social policy designs precede public opinion and when public opinion precedes policy designs and why. Scholars examining individual-level influences on welfare state policies (cf. Brooks and Manza, 2006; Cook et al., 2002; Jones, 1994; Korpi and Palme, 1998; Page and Shapiro, 1983; Stimson et al., 1995) as well as scholars investigating institutional influences on individual welfare attitudes (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Douglas, 1987; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Mau, 2003; Mettler and Soss, 2004; Rothstein, 1998; Svallfors, 1997) find empirical evidence for both relationships. Despite the existence of a plausible relationship in either direction, these scholars almost never investigate the presence of a mutual relationship (but see Sharp, 1999). The research reported in chapter 6 demonstrates that welfare institutions themselves invoke public approval of welfare policies in the case of highly established and institutionalized policy domains (for example, old-age pensions or unemployment schemes), provided that developments in these policies do not deviate too much from their original pathways. Public opinion drives the direction of welfare policy in the case of policy areas where the social policy design has not yet fully been established (for example, active labour market policy).

In sum, when welfare state legitimacy is being investigated, welfare state support at the micro level is insufficiently understood if welfare state transformations at the macro level are not taken into account as well. Taken together, this means that studies that do not adequately account for welfare state reforms can incorrectly conclude that the welfare state remains popular and that the public still supports generous and unconditional welfare arrangements, despite contemporary welfare state reforms. The findings of this Dutch case study demonstrate that the Dutch can support contemporary welfare state reforms to a high degree when these preferences are controlled for real welfare state policy. In other words, on the basis of these Dutch findings, supposed discrepancies between welfare state preferences and contemporary welfare state reforms are indeed less severe than has been suggested in previous

studies. Future studies could be significantly improved by including real welfare state reforms when welfare state preferences are being examined.

7.2.2 The Multidimensionality of Support for Welfare State Reforms

A second conclusion of this study that extends previous findings concerns the dependent variable(s). In previous studies, support for welfare state reform remains largely untested. This shortcoming is surprising given that theory aimed at understanding welfare state legitimacy is often based on assumptions about public preferences in regard to welfare state reforms. Moreover, although several studies demonstrate that welfare state support is not a one-dimensional concept (Gelissen, 2000; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Kangas, 1997; Roller, 1995; Taylor-Gooby, 1982; Van Oorschot and Meuleman, 2011), claims that support for generous welfare state arrangements remains high are predominantly based on a one-dimensional dependent variable which is supposed to summarize some form of general welfare state support (see discussions in chapters 1, 2, and 3). However, these latter claims prove to be inaccurate when a multidimensional approach is applied. Consequently, when popular support for welfare arrangements is being examined, it is essential to consider different dimensions. The findings presented in this study reveal that public support for welfare state reforms is multidimensional in several ways.

First, the findings demonstrate that the public distinguishes two ideological kinds of welfare state reform: distributive reform – decreasing redistribution – and commodifying reform – increasing recommodification (chapter 3). These two kinds of reform correspond to developments within real welfare state policies as well (see the discussion in chapter 3, compare also Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Taylor-Gooby, 1997). In contrast to the rather dominant consensus within the literature (cf. Bonoli et al., 2000; Pallier, 2003; Pierson, 1994), welfare state reforms should not be summarized under one broad umbrella of welfare state retrenchment either in theory or in the public's perceptions. In addition, the ideological basis and structure of support for distributive reform and commodifying reform is also multidimensional. The public's reasons to support distributive reform differ from the public's reasons to support commodifying

reform. These different explanations are discussed in more detail in the outline of explanatory mechanisms in section 7.2.3.

Second, these findings demonstrate that the public differentiates between whom state aid should target; this indicates once again that inaccurate claims about welfare state legitimacy can occur when support is measured through one rather general variable. Chapter 4 shows that the public at large ranks the deservingness of social categories differently. In contrast to previous scholars (Appelbaum, 2002; Coughlin, 1980; Katz, 1990; Petterson, 1995; Van Oorschot, 2000b; Van Oorschot, 2006a), I do not find one universal deservingness ranking. A ranking based on perceived identification with various social categories differs from a ranking based on perceived neediness. The extent to which different social categories are ranked as deserving depends on the frame, or context, in which social categories are presented. Furthermore, the public at large differentiates between whom welfare state reforms should target. In other words, the consequences of support for welfare state reforms are multidimensional as well.

Finally, when in-depth dimensions of specific reforms within specific welfare schemes are included, additional dimensions of support become visible. Although the distinction between distributive reforms and commodifying reforms is an improvement on an umbrella notion as captured with retrenchment, these former notions still refer to two rather general, ideological reform dimensions. At the level of specific social security arrangements targeted at specific social categories, the public distinguishes between different kinds of reform measures and the extent to which these different measures should be incorporated within different social security designs. To give an example, whereas the Dutch prefer no significant changes to old-age pension schemes, they expect a stronger emphasis on forcing social assistance recipients to behave responsibly and an increase in obligating reciprocity – reciprocity, in which returns are needs-based and conditional – within the social assistance scheme. Therefore, in order to understand support for reforms, different kinds of reforms as well as different schemes should be considered.

In sum, considering in-depth levels of support for welfare state reforms significantly improves our understanding of welfare state legitimacy. When one general kind of support is examined, the findings are contradictory and demonstrate high

support for generous welfare state arrangements. However, when in-depth levels of support are examined, the findings demonstrate that the Dutch support welfare state reforms rather than generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements. Moreover, the public differentiates in the extent to which they 1) support different reform dimensions, 2) prefer different reforms to be targeted at different social categories, 3) prefer specific reform measures to be incorporated within specific social security schemes. Future studies could be significantly improved by accounting for this multidimensionality of support for welfare state reforms.

7.2.3 Explanatory Mechanisms of Support for Welfare State Reforms

The third way in which this study's input extends previous research concerns explanatory mechanisms for understanding support for welfare state reforms. The first important finding in this regard is that it is not merely economic self-interest that explains support for welfare state reforms. Many approaches to welfare state legitimacy, mainly within political economy, tend to rely heavily on the explanatory role of class or economic self-interest (cf. De Swaan, 1988; Gelissen, 2000; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Korpi, 1983; Lipset, 1960; Pierson, 1994; Svallfors, 2007a). Following a thorough examination of the role of economic self-interest in this study (chapter 3), the findings reveal that economic self-interest has a rather limited role in the formation of attitudes on welfare state reforms. In contrast, egalitarian values (which partly, but certainly not fully, can be reduced to economic self-interest), perceptions on someone's situation (neediness), behaviour (level of compliance and control over neediness), and the level of identification with 'out'-groups, explain individual support for welfare state reform to a high extent (chapter 3). Also, support is dependent on the individuals or groups targeted by the reform policies (chapter 4). According to Dutch public opinion data, commodifying welfare state reforms should predominantly be targeted at those with whom the public at large does not identify themselves, but not at those with whom the public does identify themselves.

When different dimensions of support for welfare reforms are examined, it appear that the structure and ideological basis of support varies significantly. The findings in chapter 3 reveal remarkable differences both in factors that explain support

and in the explained variance of support. In regard to distributive reform, individual-level predictors of support include economic self-interest, economic egalitarianism (which can partly be interpreted as economic self-interest), perceptions on beneficiaries' neediness, and to a lesser extent perceptions on beneficiaries' compliance. However, these indicators explain the variance of support for distributive reform rather poorly (chapter 3). If, however, I confront these results with the findings in chapter 6 (causal relationship between individual preferences and welfare institutions), in addition to these individual-level predictors, welfare state institutions themselves probably invoke public approval to a large extent as well. Distributive reform policies relate strongly to 'old welfarism' and consequently to reforming highly established and institutionalized welfare policies.[66] In contrast, the ideological basis and structure of support for commodifying reform include economic self-interest, economic egalitarian values (which again reduce partly to economic self-interest), perceptions on a person's situation (neediness) and behaviour (level of compliance and control over neediness), and the level of identification with 'out'-groups. Perceptions on the extent to which beneficiaries can personally control their neediness have by far the strongest relative effect on the formation of attitudes on commodifying reform. Moreover, these individual-level predictors explain support for commodifying reform fairly powerfully (chapter 3). This ideological reform dimension refers more or less to evolving policy designs that are not yet fully established. When these findings are connected to those in chapter 6 – which show that evolving policy designs that are not yet fully established are not likely to affect public opinion – the robustly explained variance of support for commodifying reforms underscores the likelihood that evolving policy designs do not have much influence on attitude formation in regard to commodifying reforms.

Finally, the findings suggest a remarkable distinction between the public's considerations of how individual actors (should) behave and what the public expects

[66] It was not possible to test both individual-level and macro-level policy indicators in one model, because welfare expenditure and welfare generosity in 2006 are constant variables that do not vary across individuals in one year. Consequently, these variables cannot be used to explain variance in attitudes in one single year and one single country. In order to test this in one model, longitudinal data and/or comparison between multiple countries are called for. In this regard, longitudinal data covering all examined individual-level indicators and/or data covering these individual-level indicators for multiple countries is needed. At present, such data do not exist.

from their welfare institutions. Whereas chapter 3 shows that four moral criteria – neediness, control over neediness, identification, and compliance – could influence individual support for reform policies, chapters 4 and 5 indicate that there is a fundamental difference in the criteria used to judge the deservingness of people and the criteria used to judge the legitimacy of welfare institutions. Whereas judgements about which people deserve state aid are based on considerations of neediness and identification (chapter 4), the Dutch expect their institutions to ensure responsible behaviour by welfare claimants, to prevent welfare fraud, and to ensure reciprocal fairness (chapter 5).

In sum, the findings point to a number of important explanatory mechanisms for understanding welfare state reform. Specifically, the findings demonstrate that the Dutch could be very supportive towards reform policies even if these decrease their personal economic interest, provided that 1) people consider beneficiaries needy, 2) people identify themselves with 'out'-groups, 3) policies stimulate individual responsibility, 4) policies are aimed at preventing welfare fraud, and 5) policies are based on reciprocal fairness. Which mechanism explains support is dependent upon the policy or social category being considered – economic self-interest, in and of itself, is insufficient to explain this variation in support for welfare reform.

7.2.4 Reflection on Methods

Although this study has produced a number of findings that complement and/or extend existing welfare state legitimacy research, there are a number of methodological considerations. First, one could wonder whether it is fair to assume that the public encompasses well-thought-out attitudes about welfare arrangements in such a detailed manner. Hence, to what extent do preferences in fact refer to non-attitudes and meaningless opinions? Converse (1964) points out that non-attitudes could be a major problem in quantitative research.[67] However, for several reasons it is improbable that the research reported in this study involves non-attitudes. Non-attitudes imply that

[67] These non-attitudes merely refer to opinion polls used to indicate which proportion (in percentages) of the public at large supports or rejects a specific topic (cf. Tiemeijer 2006, who reviews literature on this subject).

citizens give random answers, meaning that attitudes could not be structured in any way. The findings presented here do not support such a claim. This study aimed to disentangle the meaning of welfare state legitimacy, as well as to explore explanatory mechanisms for legitimacy and to investigate possible cleavages between different social groups. The findings show in every single chapter of this study that public opinion is structured to a high degree. The summaries of the three main thematic findings (discussed in sections 7.2.1 to 7.2.3) outline in what way public opinion is structured, so I will not repeat that here. Also, these structures correspond quite closely to the theoretical expectations outlined in chapter 2 to chapter 6. Therefore, it is not likely that the data used in this study rely on answers given in a random manner.[68] In future studies, however, qualitative research could be used to complement the type of quantitative research presented here. An example of this complementarity would be further study into the boundaries of moral economies of welfare institutions. Whereas the quantitative methods used here have shown that legitimacy depends on the correspondence between norms incorporated within social security designs and public preferences on these norms, qualitative methods could be used to explore further the borders of moral economies of social security institutions. Since welfare state legitimacy is predicted to decrease or disappear if welfare state reforms conflict with the moral economy of social security institutions, qualitative research could expand on the theoretical underpinnings of these moral economies.

Second, the investigation into macro–micro links in this study is constrained by the limited availability of longitudinal data covering multiple years, a common limitation in this field of research. Although the analyses of the mutual (causal) relationship between attitudes and policy (chapters 2, 5, and 6) are guided by theory, and investigated as thoroughly as possible using available longitudinal data, the limited availability of multiple years of data within the data series cannot be overcome. Future research should reveal whether the theoretical premises still find empirical support when longer data series are available. Longer data series would also enable the testing

[68] Also, even if preferences at the individual level reveal non-attitudes, preferences then do appear to be rather stable at an aggregate level after all (Tiemeijer 2006).

of the theoretical premises developed in chapters 2, 5, and 6, including more welfare programmes and preferably covering more countries.

Another issue to consider in relation to the survey data used here relates to the in-depth level at which support for welfare reform is measured. Although the national surveys[69] used in this study are, to my knowledge, by far the most comprehensive surveys enabling such in-depth exploration of support for welfare state reforms, there is a limit to what can be measured. At some points, preferences, values, and relationships had to be measured in an indirect manner, despite a more direct measurement being desirable.[70] It would of course be better to avoid indirect measurements, but the data used in this study are an improvement on previous data that, if at all, provide only a superficial measurement of public opinion on welfare reform. Nevertheless, such a limitation of the data does not affect the validity of the central findings presented here: that welfare state preferences and welfare state policies are inextricably intertwined and that support for welfare state reforms should be considered in a multidimensional way.

7.2.5 Generalizability

The Dutch welfare state is the best case study choice to examine support for welfare state reforms, because of its profound welfare state reforms at two levels over a long time period. From the 1980s onwards, welfare state expenditure decreased (Green-Pedersen, 2001), while simultaneously the content and the character of Dutch welfare institutions changed fundamentally (Van Oorschot, 2006b). However, a single country analysis clearly raises the question of whether and to what extent the findings apply to other countries as well. Nonetheless, a number of findings are likely to be applicable in other institutional settings.

[69] Sources: *Arbeid, Bedrijf en Sociale Zekerheid* (Labour, Organization, and Social Security), SIG/Erasmus University 2006; *TISSER Solidarity Study*, Tilburg University 1995.

[70] Specific cases in which other, more direct measurements were preferred but not available are discussed in detail in the relevant chapters of this thesis. So, there is no need to repeat considerations in regard to specific items here where common considerations on methods are discussed.

First, the central findings that welfare state preferences and welfare state policy are inextricably intertwined and that welfare preferences are multidimensional presumably also applies to other Western welfare states. Not only in the Netherlands, but also in other Western welfare states, findings of previous research on welfare state legitimacy are contested because real welfare state policies and welfare preferences are not considered to be inseparable, and welfare state support is most often treated as a single clear-cut variable. As demonstrated in this Dutch case study, these contested findings can lead to inaccurate claims in regard to welfare state legitimacy. Consequently, previous studies concluding that welfare state legitimacy in other countries remains high and signifies support for generous welfare state arrangements might also be invalidated if real welfare policies were simultaneously examined and multiple dimensions of welfare support were investigated instead of one general dimension. Moreover, the discussed mismatches apply to the whole field of welfare state legitimacy research, and not specifically to welfare state legitimacy in the Netherlands. Therefore, if the inextricable relationship between (multidimensional) welfare state preferences and welfare state policy is investigated in other countries, it is to be supposed that alleged contradictions and mismatches in this field of research will be resolved in a similar way as in the Dutch case. I expect that people in other Western welfare states also support welfare state *reforms* rather than generous and unconditional welfare state arrangements.

Second, the findings in regard to explanatory mechanisms for support are likely to apply to other countries as well. This idea is supported by recent cross-national research, which reveals for other European countries also that self-interest is not the master determinant of support for welfare state reforms. These studies are gathered in a volume edited by Svallfors (2012a, forthcoming) and make use of the 2008 wave of the European Social Survey (round 4). These studies also reveal that economic self-interest plays a rather limited role in explaining welfare state support in other European countries and demonstrate, in line with the finding presented in this study, that moral conceptions determine welfare state support to a considerable degree (Svallfors, 2012b, forthcoming). Because of this similarity, it is rather likely that support for welfare state reforms in other Western welfare states is also rooted in moral conceptions rather than

merely in economic self-interest. However, sociocultural values as well as institutional norms vary across countries, meaning that the exact content and power of the effects of these moral conceptions are likely to vary across countries.

To conclude, the research findings presented here are important beyond the boundaries of the Netherlands. The analyses conducted in this study are an improvement on previous research, in which welfare state support is examined at a rather general level, support for welfare state reform policies are largely untested, welfare regimes count as the institutional component in examining the policy–opinion nexus, and studies on the opinion–policy nexus are seldom empirically informed. This study is, to my knowledge, by far the most comprehensive study addressing preferences on welfare state reform policies because it also includes the macro level of policy designs. Simultaneously, the findings of this study resolve alleged contradictions deriving from previous studies.

7.3 Theoretical Implications

There are a number of important theoretical implications that can be derived from the findings presented here. First, the finding that welfare state preferences and welfare policy are inextricably intertwined has implications for our understanding of the mechanism of path dependency at the institutional level, as well as of feedback effects of social policy on mass publics and blame-avoidance mechanisms employed by politicians (section 7.3.1). Moreover, the findings of this study add to the deservingness literature (section 7.3.2).

7.3.1 Implications for Path Dependency, Feedback Effects, and Blame Avoidance

In the literature on welfare state reform, the dominant view within political theory is that welfare state policy is path dependent. Path dependency refers to high costs of reversal once a policy starts down a specific track, causing future policy options to be highly determined by previous decisions (cf. Levi, 1997; Pierson, 1994; 2000). ‘The notion of path dependency […] encourage[s] scholars to think of change in one of two

ways, *either* as very minor and more or less continuous (the more frequent type), *or* as very major but then abrupt and discontinuous (the much rarer type)' (Streeck and Thelen, 2005: 7). My study's findings suggest a less clear-cut distinction: politicians have adequate room to reform highly established, path-dependent policy designs without paying the reversal costs for cut-backs (new politics) after a period of welfare expansion (old politics). As chapter 5 outlines, rules to prevent dependency and abuse have been intensified within various schemes in order to increase responsibility and legality. Moreover, norms of balanced reciprocity – reciprocity, in which returns are equivalent to one's status or former contributions – as well as obligating reciprocity have increased within various policy designs. In the literature on welfare state reforms, such reform policies are considered path-breaking because they are abrupt and discontinuous rather than very minor and more or less continuous. However, the research reported in this study demonstrates that Dutch reforms do fit within a policy's original path.

Path dependency is argued to be a result of 'lock-in' effects, because 'policies provide incentives that encourage individuals to act in ways that *lock in a particular path of policy* development' (Pierson, 1993: 606). Pierson (1993: 605-610) argues that, as a result of lock-in effects, previous institutional pathways and choices constrain alternatives of policymakers to transform policy designs if transformations affect material interests of mass publics. However, a policy's pathways are also strongly demarcated by a policy's moral economy. As chapter 5 demonstrates, welfare state transformations are legitimate, provided that the institutional norms underlying welfare state reforms do not conflict with public preferences. Or in other words, reforms should not breach the moral contract between the governed and the authorities. Therefore, in order to understand the legitimacy of reform policies, we need to know rather precisely what demarcates the boundaries of institutions' moral economies. If reforms are too rigorous and cross over these moral boundaries, hence, if reforms breach the implicit moral contract between the authorities and the governed, riots and mass resistance are predicted (Scott, 1976; Thompson, 1971). An initiative to research in detail these borders in four Dutch social security institutions is reported in chapter 5. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to demarcate the boundaries of an institution's moral economy. In order to disentangle in more detail which reform pathways are likely

to be perceived as legitimate, future research should thoroughly examine what defines the moral economies – and their boundaries – of different welfare institutions, preferably in different countries. Such an approach would also enable in-depth comparison of welfare institutions across countries by deviating from the ambiguous regime concept (compare discussion in chapter 6). Therefore, future research should address this challenge.

The findings discussed here also extend Pierson's (1993) theory on policy feedback effects on mass publics; this is not surprising, because this theory is strongly interconnected to that of path dependency. Svallfors (2007b) has already claimed that a normative feedback effect should be added to the two different feedback effects outlined by Pierson – resource and incentive effects and interpretive effects – and my findings underscore Svallfors' claim. 'A normative feedback mechanism is present where public policies provide citizens with a sense not only of what their material interests are and who is responsible for different political decisions but also of the desirable state of affairs' (Svallfors, 2007b: 267). On the basis of the findings in chapter 5, the norms defining an institution's moral economy cover this desirable state of affairs. However, scholars examining institutional feedback effects assume that institutions affect mass publics and not vice versa. It is assumed that public policy tells people what their material interests are, who is responsible for policy decisions, and 'what the world ought to look like' (Svallfors, 2007b: 267) in terms of a moral economy. However, the findings in chapter 6 suggest that this direction of causality only applies to highly institutionalized policy domains, not to evolving or otherwise not yet established policy areas. To further improve our understanding of welfare state legitimacy, future research should focus on unravelling which specific welfare domains affect public opinion and vice versa. Such research would also add to our understanding of the cases in which politicians should fear electoral punishment after implementing unpopular policy measures – although it should be mentioned that it is rather difficult to examine these causal relationships at such a detailed level, due to a lack of micro data (as discussed in chapter 6). However, the 2008 model of the European Social Survey, *Welfare Attitudes in a Changing Europe*, does increase opportunities to address these issues.

In regard to mechanisms of blame avoidance, the findings presented here have implications for whether and when politicians should fear electoral punishment. Several scholars argue that politicians prevent reform measures when they fear electoral punishment for these (unpopular) reforms (as discussed in chapter 6; see also Brooks and Manza, 2006; Pierson, 1994). On the basis of the findings discussed here, politicians do not have to fear electoral punishment for every reform measure. In the case of traditional, established, and highly institutionalized policies, such as the old-age pension or unemployment schemes, public opinion adjusts to developments in these institutions, provided that reforms follow the original pathways of these institutions (chapter 6). In regard to the old-age pension scheme and the unemployment scheme, the path from which politicians should not significantly deviate is that of protecting the unemployed and the elderly against poverty for which they bear no personal responsibility. Politicians do, however, have to fear reform policies that conflict with the moral economy of these welfare state institutions, although it is difficult to predict exactly which kind of reform policies remain within a moral economy's boundary. Therefore, empirical research that demarcates the borders of the moral economies of these institutions is once again called for. When introducing relatively new and still evolving policies, politicians should fear electoral punishment if they introduce measures that differ from the public's preferences. Hence, these findings specify in more detail in what policy domains public opinion matters and in regard to which reform measures politicians should fear electoral punishment.

7.3.2 Implications for Theory on Who Deserves Help and Why

The findings reported in this study also add to the deservingness literature in two ways. First, the finding that deservingness depends on the frame in which it is presented implies that the presumed universal deservingness ranking across countries could be different if another frame is used to judge deservingness. Jæger (2007) questioned the existence of a universal deservingness ranking and wondered whether the 'deserving' needy are really considered deserving everywhere. He demonstrated that the concept of 'deserving' needy carries different meanings across countries and cultures. The findings in chapter 4 also demonstrate that it is not self-evident that the same social categories

are always considered most deserving. The Dutch, for example, consider the sick least deserving in terms of need – a consequence of rather generous sick pay in the Netherlands (compare chapter 4). Jæger could not explain the differences in deservingness between countries. My findings suggest that these differences stem from the different underlying criteria that people in different countries use to judge deservingness. To give an example, in countries where benefit-income levels for social categories that are usually judged as most deserving are relatively generous, it is possible for people to judge the neediness of these social categories as low (as is the case in regard to considerations of the neediness of the sick in the Netherlands).

Second, the findings of this study can assist scholars who are devoting effort to distinguishing criteria that the public may use to judge welfare beneficiaries' deservingness (cf. Albrekt Larsen, 2006; Appelbaum, 2002; Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Gilens, 1999; Van Oorschot, 2000b) as well as scholars investigating the effects of framing reform in terms of these criteria (cf. Cox, 2001; Levy, 1999; Slothuus, 2007). These scholars fail to make a distinction between considerations that concern people (welfare claimants) and expectations of welfare institutions. Various scholars argue that 'the locus of control' is the most important determinant of support for welfare beneficiaries (Appelbaum, 2002; Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Will, 1993). These scholars assume, however, that these perceptions concern expectations about how people should behave in order to deserve state aid, whereas these perceptions rather represent expectations about how institutions should work. If those who bear personal responsibility for their neediness receive state aid, the public perceives this as institutional failure rather than as immoral behaviour on the part of individuals. A recent study by Mascini and Houtman (2011) into rehabilitation reveals a similar pattern. The authors demonstrate that the evaluated legitimacy of a policy instrument strongly depends on the specific nature of the objects of that instrument: people support rehabilitation if the objects of a policy instrument are considered fraudulent. Welfare beneficiaries who bear personal responsibility for their neediness and/or who receive benefits to which they are not entitled, in a way, also behave fraudulently. Therefore, it is indeed likely that people expect their government to ensure that such behaviour is not possible, or, if it does occur, that it will be punished. Future research could be

significantly improved by accounting for this distinction between the criteria the public uses to judge its institutions and the criteria the public uses to judge welfare claimants.

7.4 Recapitulation: the Welfare State Legitimacy Paradox Unravelled and Explained

It is possible to explain many alleged discrepancies between developments in public opinion and policy transformations when welfare state support is re-examined at an in-depth level. Here, I discuss how the approach conducted in this study unravels the legitimacy paradox even further than already outlined throughout this chapter. Moreover, I speculate on a possible explanation for the persistent lacuna between research focusing merely on welfare state transformations and research focusing merely on welfare state preferences.

7.4.1 Unravelling Remaining Discrepancies

As argued throughout this chapter, many mismatches within the field of welfare state legitimacy stem from an inaccurate measurement of welfare state support in previous empirical research. When real welfare policies are included, these discrepancies largely disappear. In this section, I focus on mismatches that still remain and have not previously been discussed in relation to the findings of this study. Investigation of welfare state support at an in-depth level reveals several alleged discrepancies that indeed appear less clear-cut than suggested on the basis of previous studies. First, it is not self-evident that people reject contemporary welfare state reforms as soon as these policies decrease people's personal economic interest, as is suggested by several scholars (see discussion in chapter 1). In fact, the findings reveal that people can be strong supporters of *specific* reform policies within *specific* schemes targeted at *specific* social categories, even if these reform policies decrease people's economic interest (as demonstrated in chapters 3, 4, and 5). Other scholars predicted that the rise in prosperity that occurred in the last century would decrease welfare state support. This prediction is also based on rational calculating individuals that strive to maximize their

personal economic interest. However, as shown here, these predictions are based on inaccurate assumptions about why people support welfare state arrangements, thus rendering the conclusions drawn from these assumptions invalid.

Second, there is no conflicting trend in welfare state support and perceptions of increasing welfare fraud. At a rather general level, the findings of this study reveal that a precondition for support for both distributive welfare reform – decreasing redistribution – and commodifying reform – increasing recommodification – is that welfare beneficiaries are considered as noncompliant (chapter 3). At the level of whom these reform policies should target, the findings show that preferences for reform measures in order to prevent abuse are dependent on the policy considered. The Dutch prefer to strongly emphasize abuse prevention within the disability scheme (in the Netherlands, fraud within this particular scheme has been relatively high), to emphasize to some degree fraud prevention within the old-age pension scheme, and a continuation of the already existing strong emphasis on fraud prevention within the unemployment and social assistance schemes (chapter 5). Moreover, the Dutch also rank the level of compliance of social groups differently. The Dutch consider the elderly as most compliant and both the unemployed and those living on social assistance least compliant (chapter 4). Therefore, there is in fact no clear discrepancy in this regard, because the Dutch do not unanimously prefer generous and unconditional welfare arrangements to be targeted at all the poor in the same degree, as is suggested in previous studies. Instead, in relation to specific policies targeted at specific beneficiaries, in several cases the Dutch support reform policies aimed at preventing welfare fraud.

Finally, in regard to the expected generational conflict (see discussion in chapter 1), a multidimensional approach to support for welfare state reform also reveals some interesting conclusions (chapter 3). In theory, the young – who generally hold a more vulnerable socioeconomic position, which increases their economic interest in welfare arrangements – are expected to support welfare state reforms (both decreasing redistribution as well as increasing recommodification) to a lesser extent than older people. However, the empirical evidence for this premise remains poor (as discussed in chapter 1). The findings in chapter 3 underscore a possible generational conflict in two ways. First, the young support distributive reform to a greater extent than older people.

This result could be indicative of the expected generational conflict, since the young not only profit from distributive welfare policies, but also have to carry the greatest weight of the demographic burden of ageing societies. Second, the findings reveal that older people support recommodification to a greater extent than the young if they consider poverty as being self-inflicted. Since becoming old is clearly beyond one's personal influence, older people apparently keep the self-inflicted poverty of younger generations in mind. Hence, this finding could be indicative of a reverse kind of generational conflict. These results could derive from the difference that Inglehart (1997) observes between modern (materialist) generations (birth cohorts who suffered from material insecurity in World War I and World War II) and postmodern (postmaterialist) generations (referring to birth cohorts who did not; see the discussion in the concluding section of chapter 3). However, although these issues are interesting and important in regard to (future) welfare state legitimacy, on the basis of the findings of this study I can only speculate on *possible* explanations for *possible* age conflicts. It is a challenge for future research to clarify this contradiction and examine the extent to which possible age conflicts may arise in a multidimensional approach to welfare state legitimacy.

7.4.2 Why Do Scholars Focus Either on Welfare Policy or on Public Opinion?

My point of departure for this study was the paradoxical relationship between welfare state policy developments and welfare state preferences. On the one hand, scholars – mainly political scientists – tend to focus merely on welfare state reforms at the macro level, largely neglecting to validate their theoretical reasoning empirically at the micro level. On the other hand, other scholars – mainly sociologists – tend to focus on analysing micro-level preferences in great detail, largely neglecting contemporary macro-level transformations of welfare state policy. As the findings of the research reported in this study demonstrate, merging these two approaches unravels inconsistencies present within welfare state legitimacy research. Yet, why does research about social policy and welfare state reforms remain largely isolated from research about popular welfare state preferences? Why has support for welfare state reforms

been largely untested so far? It is possible that this lacuna stems from methodological limitations due to missing micro data. However, it is also plausible that this blind spot stems from a tendency of researchers towards path-dependent research in either direction.

The reasons why welfare policies are argued to be path dependent could also apply to scholars investigating welfare state legitimacy both at the macro level and at the micro level. It is likely that welfare state researchers initially were confronted with the relatively high set-up or fixed costs that accompany new fields of research. Pierson (1993: 605-609), building on Arthur (1989), argues in regard to social policy that, after high set-up costs, there are likely to be increasing returns as well as learning effects relatively free of charge, which in turn provide individuals with an incentive to stick with a single option, that is, to effectively lock in previous decisions. These arguments as to why policies are path dependent can also explain the observed blind spot of political scientists and sociologists. As argued above, scholars have put effort into understanding welfare state legitimacy either through theoretical reasoning based on macro-level developments in social policy designs or through empirical research based on micro-level analyses of welfare state preferences. In a way, both scholars currently profit from increasing returns and learning effects following previous investments. Because of increasing returns and learning effects, one could reasonably expect to reach a stage in which knowledge becomes cumulative rather than explorative. Since welfare state legitimacy researchers strive to understand complex societal processes, they obviously aim to reach such a stage. Therefore, scholars often tend to research welfare state legitimacy in ways that are familiar to them, convinced that their approach captures reality best. Consequently, their research becomes path dependent. Moreover, sticking to path-dependent logics, in a way, also gets rewarded through increased output in the form of publications. Therefore, path dependency could explain why this persistent blind spot within welfare state legitimacy research has rarely been addressed in previous research.

7.5 The Relationship between Contemporary Politics and Welfare State Preferences

Before closing this study, I would like finally to point out the noteworthy similarity between the findings presented here and contemporary politics. Contemporary politics displays a similar two-dimensional space between a traditional redistributive dimension – referring to distributive politics based on neediness – and a sociocultural dimension – referring to recommodification and identification. The lines of social demarcation emphasized within politics no longer solely concern traditional left–right issues. Leftist parties still prefer income redistribution from the rich to the poor in order to promote equality, and rightist parties still prefer free markets to a large welfare state. However, following the rise of new rightist parties, a sociocultural dimension emphasizing issues of deviancy and identification has emerged gradually: deviant behaviour is increasingly rejected and reciprocal justice is increasingly emphasized (Achterberg, 2006b; Achterberg and Houtman, 2006; Houtman and Achterberg, 2010; Van der Waal and Achterberg, 2006). Hence, contemporary politics and public opinion are now arrowed in a similar two-dimensional space. Following Svallfors (2006: 165), who analysed class attitudes, the first space 'concerns issues of (re)distribution, in which manual workers adopt a "leftist" orientation toward equality and redistribution, with the service class occupying the right. […] The second attitudinal dimension is the moral conservative, conformist, or libertarian-authoritarian dimension. Here the workers occupy what is typically considered a "rightist" position at the pole where moral conservatism and scepticism toward nonconformity are at their strongest.' For these reasons, the findings discussed above and contemporary political developments display similar trends, which is of course not surprising since in parliamentary democracies the power of political parties depends also on the support of the electorate.

Conversely, other scholars argue that the direction of causality is the other way around, hence that political articulation affects public opinion (Hall, 1997; Kumlin and Svallfors, 2007; Svallfors, 2006). In this reasoning, the public adapts their preferences to what are politically articulated as being *the* most crucial problems in a country. Through this articulation, politicians aim to change or create public preferences in order to win electoral support for their political ideas. In many Western welfare states, and also in

the Netherlands, issues of identification and scepticism towards nonconformity increasingly dominate modern political arenas rather than issues of distributive justice. Therefore, regardless of the direction of causality, the results of this study and political developments in the Netherlands interconnect to a high degree.

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Dutch Summary

Het doel van het onderzoek dat in dit proefschrift is weergegeven is om beter te begrijpen hoe burgers denken over de verzorgingsstaat en haar verzorgingsarrangementen. In de bestaande wetenschappelijke literatuur observeerde ik een opmerkelijke tegenstelling: de (vermeende) opvattingen van burgers leken haaks te staan op de herzieningen die in de afgelopen decennia hebben plaatsgevonden in het werkelijke beleid. Terwijl verschillende studies aantonen dat de steun van burgers voor onvoorwaardelijke en genereuze verzorgingsarrangementen sinds de jaren zeventig van de vorige eeuw onverminderd hoog is gebleven – en in sommige landen, bijvoorbeeld Nederland, zelfs is gestegen – heeft het werkelijke beleid zich in tegenovergestelde richting ontwikkeld: de verzorgingsstaat wordt juist soberder en meer voorwaardelijk. Deze tegenstelling is het startpunt van mijn onderzoek om in detail te onderzoeken of en waarom burgers verzorgingsarrangementen steunen en hoe deze steun zich heeft ontwikkeld tussen 1980 en 2006.

Er zijn verschillende redenen om te twijfelen aan de validiteit van de empirische onderzoeken die laten zien dat de steun van burgers voor onvoorwaardelijke en genereuze verzorgingsarrangementen onverminderd hoog is gebleven in de afgelopen decennia. Ten eerste is het in een parlementaire democratie onwaarschijnlijk dat de publieke opinie en werkelijk beleid langdurig en fundamenteel van elkaar afwijken. Als burgers het niet eens zijn met de beleidsvoorkeuren van de regering, kunnen ze namelijk op een andere partij stemmen. In alle Westerse verzorgingsstaten, en ook in Nederland, zijn de uitkeringen en voorzieningen steeds meer voorwaardelijk en minder genereus geworden (cf. Esping-Andersen, 2001; Giddens, 1998; Gilbert, 2004; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Van der Veen, 2009; Van Oorschot, 2006b). Daarom is het niet aannemelijk dat de opvattingen van burgers zich in precies de tegenovergestelde richting ontwikkelen. In empirische studies wordt dit echter wel gesuggereerd (cf. Becker, 2005; Blomberg and Kroll, 1999; Bonoli et al., 2000; Ferrera, 1993; Kaase and Newton, 1995; Ringen, 1987; Van Oorschot, 2002). De ontwikkelingen in electorale steun voor neoliberale partijen

suggereren ook dat de breuk tussen publieke opinie en politiek minder sterk is. De publieke steun voor traditionele partijen die een voorkeur hebben voor genereuze en onvoorwaardelijke verzorgingsarrangementen is gedaald in de afgelopen decennia, terwijl tegelijkertijd de publieke steun voor neoliberale partijen, die minder genereuze en voorwaardelijke arrangementen wensen, is gestegen (vgl. figuur 2.1 in hoofdstuk 2; zie ook Achterberg et al. 2010). Ten tweede kunnen toenemende welvaart (cf. Pierson, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991; Wilensky, 1975), individualisering (cf. Giddens, 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Kaase and Newton, 1995) en demografische ontwikkelingen (cf. Alesina et al., 2001; Arts and Muffels, 2001; Bonoli et al., 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2004) ieder op zich de bereidheid tot solidariteit aantasten waardoor de steun voor verzorgings-arrangementen daalt. Tot slot zijn er tegenstrijdige tendensen waarneembaar in de publieke opinie. Tegenover studies die hoge, of toenemende steun voor genereuze verzorgingsarrangementen aantonen, staan andere studies die laten zien dat veel burgers denken dat er veel misbruik wordt gemaakt van verzorgingsarrangementen (Coughlin, 1980: 113-117; Goul Andersen, 1999; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1985: 132-133) en er blijkt een toename van verzorgingsstaatschauvinisme te zijn – minder steun voor verzorgingsarrangementen voor etnische minderheden - (Bay and Pedersen, 2006; Halvorsen, 2007; Van der Waal et al., 2010; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007).

Kort samengevat: het onderzoek naar de legitimiteit van de verzorgingsstaat heeft een paradox gecreëerd. Waar empirische studies laten zien dat de steun voor genereuze en onvoorwaardelijke verzorgingsarrangementen stabiel hoog is gebleven sinds de jaren 1980 –in Nederland is deze zelfs gestegen – zijn er, in theorie, goede redenen om een afname van deze steun te verwachten.

De paradox in het onderzoek naar de legitimiteit van de verzorgingsstaat is ontstaan door een tweetal tekortkomingen in het bestaande empirisch onderzoek. Ten eerste is empirisch onderzoek naar opvattingen over herzieningen van de verzorgingsstaat onderontwikkeld. Het is mogelijk dat burgers inderdaad nog steeds collectieve bescherming tegen sociale risico's zoals werkloosheid of ouderdom steunen, maar dat de betekenis van deze steun veranderd is. Wellicht steunen burgers niet langer de genereuze en onvoorwaardelijke verzorgingsarrangementen van de jaren 1970, maar juist de toenemende versobering en voorwaardelijkheid van deze arrangementen die is

ingezet in de jaren 1980. Ten tweede is er in bestaande empirische onderzoeken veel aandacht voor steun – legitimiteit- op een algemeen niveau en nauwelijks voor diepgaand onderzoek naar steun voor verschillende dimensies van de verzorgingsstaat. Wanneer wordt afgeweken van onderzoek naar dé steun voor dé verzorgingsstaat in zijn algemeenheid, kunnen een aantal van de genoemde tegenstrijdigheden verdwijnen. Het is bijvoorbeeld mogelijk dat burgers bepaalde herzieningen wel steunen, terwijl zij zich sterk verzetten tegen andere herzieningen. In deze studie zijn daarom de volgende vraagstellingen onderzocht: in welke mate steunen Nederlanders verzorgingsarrangementen en waarom? En hoe is deze steun gerelateerd aan herzieningen van verzorgingsarrangementen in het werkelijke beleid?

Deze vraagstelling is onderzocht in Nederland. Nederland is een geschikte casus, omdat dit een van de weinige Westerse landen is waar de uitgaven aan verzorgingsarrangementen sinds de jaren 1980 daadwerkelijk gedaald zijn (Green-Pedersen 2001). Bovendien is het karakter van de verzorgingsarrangementen in Nederland ook fundamenteel veranderd sinds de jaren 1980. Kort gezegd heeft er in Nederland een verschuiving plaatsgevonden van een model gericht op collectieve solidariteit naar een model gericht op het stimuleren van individuele verantwoordelijkheid van uitkeringsgerechtigden (Van Oorschot, 2006b; Yerkes, 2011; Yerkes and van der Veen, 2011).

Hieronder worden kort de empirische bevindingen uit dit proefschrift samengevat. De resultaten tonen allereerst dat validiteit van studies die concluderen dat dé steun voor dé verzorgingsstaat in zijn algemeenheid stabiel, hoog is gebleven of, zoals in Nederland, is gestegen twijfelachtig is. De resultaten in hoofdstuk 2 laten zien dat de gebruikte data om steun voor genereuze verzorgingsarrangementen te meten op zijn minst discutabel is en de interpretatie van de waargenomen trends in eerder onderzoek twijfelachtig is. Na her-analyse van de data blijkt dat de conclusie evengoed omgekeerd kan zijn, namelijk dat burgers niet langer de genereuze en onvoorwaardelijke arrangementen steunen, maar juist de herzieningen van de verzorgingsstaat die zijn ingezet in de jaren 1980 zijn gaan steunen. Deze resultaten vormden de aanleiding om in hoofdstuk 3 in

detail te onderzoeken hoe Nederlanders denken over herziening van de verzorgingsstaat.

De resultaten in hoofdstuk 3 tonen dat Nederlanders verzorgingsarrangementen nog steeds in hoge mate steunen, maar dat zij wel steeds meer voorwaarden verbinden aan deze steun. Wanneer het Nederlandse publiek direct wordt gevraagd hoe het denkt over herzieningen van de verzorgingsstaat blijkt ten eerste dat steun voor herziening van de verzorgingsstaat twee ideologische dimensies kent. De eerste ideologische herzienings-dimensie gaat over herzieningen die leiden tot minder herverdeling. Deze herzieningen verminderen sociale rechten en collectieve bescherming tegen sociale risico's door toenemende selectiviteit in de toegang tot regelingen en toenemende privatisering van risicodekking en leverantie van diensten. De tweede ideologische herzieningsdimensie gaat over zogenaamde *commodifying* herzieningen die wederkerigheid vergroten. Door deze herzieningen moeten uitkeringsgerechtigden aan steeds meer plichten voldoen om in aanmerking te komen voor een uitkering. Het beleid is in toenemende mate gericht op het disciplineren van uitkeringsgerechtigden en het stimuleren van hun arbeidsparticipatie.

Ten tweede blijkt dat steun voor deze twee dimensies niet hoofdzakelijk wordt bepaald door puur economische - of klasse belangen wat doorgaans wordt beschouwd als de belangrijkste verklaring voor steun in de literatuur (cf. Bean and Papadakis, 1998; De Swaan, 1988; Gelissen, 2000; Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Jæger, 2006a; Lipset, 1960; Pierson, 1994; 1996; Svallfors, 2007a). Het Nederlandse publiek steunt herzieningen die leiden tot minder herverdeling als de vermeende hulpbehoevendheid van degenen die een uitkering ontvangen laag is. De steun voor *commodifying* herzieningen die wederkerigheid vergroten is niet alleen afhankelijk van de vermeende hulpbehoevendheid van uitkeringsgerechtigden, maar ook van opvattingen over hun schuld voor hulpbehoevendheid, vermeend misbruik van verzorgingsarrangementen en identificatie met sociale groepen. Als mensen geloven dat uitkeringsgerechtigden zelf verantwoordelijk zijn voor hun hulpbehoevendheid, niet hun best doen om een baan te vinden en/of misbruik maken van verzorgingsarrangementen steunen zij deze herzieningsdimensie. Dit betekent dat de publieke opinie zich inderdaad

niet in tegenovergestelde richting heeft ontwikkeld van het werkelijke beleid als onderscheid wordt gemaakt in steun voor verschillende herzieningsdimensies.

De steun voor deze twee herzieningsdimensies kan verschillende consequenties hebben voor verschillende sociale groepen. In hoofdstuk 4 is onderzocht op welke sociale groepen herzieningen voornamelijk toegepast zouden moeten worden volgens het Nederlandse publiek. Allereerst blijkt dat de mate waarin het Nederlandse publiek verschillende sociale groepen als verdienstelijk rangschikt varieert al naar gelang het criterium waar deze verdienstelijkheid op wordt beoordeeld. Een rangorde gebaseerd op de mate waarin sociale groepen worden gezien als hulpbehoevend verschilt van een rangorde gebaseerd op de mate van identificatie met verschillende sociale groepen. Vervolgens blijkt dat mensen die herzieningen die wederkerigheid vergroten steunen deze *commodifying* herzieningen bij voorkeur willen toepassen op groepen waar zij zich het minst mee identificeren (bijstandsgerechtigden, werklozen) en niet op sociale groepen waar zij zich het meest mee identificeren (ouderen). Echter, het Nederlandse publiek wil herzieningen die leiden tot minder herverdeling niet bij voorkeur toepassen op uitkeringsgerechtigden met de laagste vermeende hulpbehoevendheid. Het Nederlandse publiek maakt geen onderscheid tussen de mate waarin sociale groepen getroffen moeten worden door verdelende herzieningen.

In hoofdstuk vijf is afgeweken van deze twee algemene ideologische dimensies van herzieningen. De steun voor herzieningen van vier verschillende sociale zekerheidsarrangementen is onderzocht. De resultaten tonen dat de steun voor de verzorgingsstaat voor een belangrijk deel is terug te voeren op de veranderingen die binnen afzonderlijke regelingen hebben plaatsgevonden. Burgers steunen herziening van sociale zekerheidsarrangementen die passen binnen de rechtvaardigheidsprincipes van de morele economie van deze instituties. De resultaten in hoofdstuk 5 laten zien dat de herzieningen die zijn doorgevoerd in de Nederlandse sociale zekerheidsregelingen passen binnen deze rechtvaardigheidsprincipes. De hoge steun voor de verzorgingsstaat in Nederland is dus niet een teken van protest tegen herzieningen die in de Nederlandse verzorgingsstaat hebben plaatsgevonden maar een teken van steun voor deze herzieningen. Het idee dat de verzorgingsstaat herzien moet worden wordt breed gesteund, vooral waar het gaat om een toename van verplichtende wederkerigheid.

In het laatste empirische hoofdstuk 6 is de wisselwerking tussen de publieke opinie en werkelijke beleidsontwerpen onderzocht. Wanneer past sociaal beleid zich aan de publieke opinie aan en wanneer past de publieke opinie zich aan bestaand sociaal beleid aan? Aan de ene kant stellen onderzoekers dat de publieke opinie beleid kan beïnvloeden (cf. Korpi 1983; Brooks en Manza 2006; Pierson 1994). Hiertegenover stellen andere onderzoekers dat burgers geen invloed hebben op sociaal beleid, maar dat dit beleid juist de publieke opinie beïnvloedt (cf. Mettler en Soss, 2004; Douglas 1987). Het onderzoek dat is beschreven in hoofdstuk 6 toont dat de richting van de causaliteit afhankelijk is van of het gaat om gevestigde en sterk geïnstitutionaliseerde beleidsonderwerpen en relatief nieuwe beleidsonderwerpen die nog in ontwikkeling zijn. De werkelijke uitgaven aan relatief oude beleidsonderwerpen die gevestigd en sterk geïnstitutionaliseerd zijn hebben geen invloed op de publieke opinie, terwijl voorkeuren van het publiek om meer uit te geven aan al gevestigd en sterk geïnstitutionaliseerd beleid geen invloed hebben op de werkelijke uitgaven aan dit beleid. Als het gaat om relatief nieuw beleid dat nog in ontwikkeling is, zoals activeringsbeleid, dan blijkt dat dit sociaal beleid zich aanpast aan de voorkeuren van het publiek. Omgekeerd heeft dit beleid geen invloed op de publieke opinie.

Samenvattend vult het onderzoek dat is weergegeven in dit proefschrift eerder onderzoek naar de legitimiteit van de verzorgingsstaat aan met drie thematische bevindingen. Ten eerste zijn de publieke opinie over verzorgingsarrangementen en sociaal beleid onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden. Wanneer we de steun voor (of de legitimiteit van) verzorgingsarrangementen willen begrijpen is het noodzakelijk om gelijktijdig (de ontwikkelingen van) de inhoud van feitelijk sociaal beleid te beschouwen. De bestaande empirische onderzoeken die suggereren dat burgers sinds de jaren 1970 een voorkeur hebben voor onvoorwaardelijke en genereuze verzorgingsarrangementen hebben dat niet gelijktijdig gedaan. Ten tweede bestaat de steun voor herziening van de verzorgingsstaat uit verschillende ideologische dimensies. Wanneer slechts één algemene dimensie van steun wordt onderzocht kunnen er verkeerde conclusies getrokken worden. Ten derde is economisch eigenbelang niet de belangrijkste verklaring voor steun voor verzorgingsarrangementen. Het is niet vanzelfsprekend dat mensen met een kwetsbare sociaal-economische positie zich verzetten tegen herziening van de

verzorgingsstaat die hun persoonlijke belangen verminderen. Het is ook niet vanzelfsprekend dat mensen met een sterke sociaal-economische positie herzieningen die hun persoonlijke belangen vergroten steunen. Er is steun voor verzorgingsarrangementen voor mensen die het echt nodig hebben, maar het Nederlandse publiek verbindt hier voorwaarden aan. Deze voorwaarden komen overeen met hoe het beleid zich in de afgelopen decennia heeft ontwikkeld.

Kortom, de geobserveerde paradox in Nederland is inderdaad ontstaan door tekortkomingen in bestaande empirisch onderzoeken. De resultaten die zijn weergegeven in dit proefschrift laten in de Nederlandse casus zien dat de opvattingen van burgers zich niet in tegenovergestelde richting hebben ontwikkeld dan het werkelijke beleid. Wanneer er rekening wordt gehouden met de drie genoemde punten, blijkt dat burgers herzieningen van de verzorgingsstaat kunnen steunen. Er is dan geen sprake van de vermeende kloof tussen burger en politiek.

About the Author

Judith Raven (1978) was born in Geleen, the Netherlands. She obtained her master degree in Sociology at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, in 2003. In her master thesis, she examined the relationship between job satisfaction and social capital. In 2004 and 2005 she worked at Bureau Driessen, a commercial bureau for social sciences research. Between 2006 and 2011, Judith Raven worked on her PhD-thesis at the department of Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam, and at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR). During her tenure at the university, Judith Raven examined public attitudes towards welfare state arrangement and welfare state reforms. She is (co-)author of a book, several book chapters and published articles, among others in Journal of Social Policy and Current Sociology, and she presented papers at several national and international conferences and summer schools. In 2008, she helped organising the ESPA*net*/RECWOWE summerschool 'New Risks and New Governance in Europe' in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Since 2011, Judith Raven has been appointed at the department of sociology of Erasmus University Rotterdam on a project funded by the GAK foundation (Stichting Instituut GAK). Currently she is studying the interaction between social security provided through the welfare state and social security provided through collective agreements. When she is not working, Judith Raven enjoys culinary dinners, cooking, oenology, and coffee. She also likes photography as it enables perpetuating beautiful moments of life. Also, she loves to visit Italy as often as possible to enjoy the Italian culture and language.